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## MR. BLAINE AND THE BOUNDARY QUESTION BETWEEN MEXICO AND GUATEMALA.

There is an incident in the diplomatic history of the United States which may be called unique, and the like of which, I hope, in the interest of this country, will not occur again. I refer to the action taken in 1881 by Mr. James G. Blaine, as Secretary of State of the United States of America under President Garfield's administration, on the boundary dispute between Mexico and Guatemala.

Mr. Blaine's conduct in this case left in the Mexican people, even among the higher educated classes, the impression that he was unfriendly to Mexico, and that he took advantage of the Guatemala boundary question to show his ill-will towards us. One of my principal reasons in writing this paper has been to disabuse the minds of the Mexican people on this subject. I have carefully studied all the details and incidents of this question, as well as Mr. Blaine's personal traits of character, disposition, views and aims, and having arrived at the conclusion that his devotion to arbitration as a means to supplant war, and not any unfriendly feeling towards Mexico, made him go further in this case than it was reasonable to expect, I thought that I owed it to the good understanding of the two neighboring republics to show this in a conclusive manner.

To be fair and to attain the object in view, I have to present the case in all its bearings as I understand them, without concealing any incident, whether favorable or unfavorable to Mr. Blaine, and if sometimes I seem to criticise his conduct on this question, it is with the purpose stated.

It has been the aim of my life to remove all causes of misunderstanding between our two countries, especially when they are due, as is often the case, to misinformation or misapprehension on the part of the people of either, and I certainly would not allow the misapprehension about Mr. Blaine's motives to stand if I could help it.

In preparing this article, to review that incident, I will use only such data as have been officially published by this Government in the "Papers relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States" transmitted to Congress with the annual message of the President, December 5th, 1881," and in two special messages from President Arthur accompanying correspondence called for by both

Houses of Congress, one addressed to the Senate on February 17, 1882,\* and the other to the House of Representatives on May 6, 1884.†

#### I.—BOUNDARY QUESTION BETWEEN MEXICO AND GUATEMALA.

For a clear understanding of this subject, it will be necessary to state briefly what was the status of the boundary question between Mexico and Guatemala at the beginning of President Garfield's administration.

Under the Spanish rule, and just before gaining their independence from Spain, the five Central American Provinces, now the States of Guatemala, Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, were organized under one colonial government, presided over by a Spanish Captain-General, and called the Guatemalan Captain-Generalship, having its capital at the City of Guatemala. The present State of Chiapas, belonging now to Mexico, was then an integral part of that colony, forming its sixth province.

Mexican independence was proclaimed by Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla on September 16, 1810, and was followed by our War of Independence, which lasted, with varying successes, until September 27th, 1821, when all the conservative elements of the country, that is, the clergy, the army, the nobility and the native-born Spaniards, which had opposed independence, united under Iturbide, who, although a native Mexican, had been during the whole war one of the military leaders of the Spanish cause, and who proclaimed on February 24, 1821, at the City of Iguala a political platform, called Plan of Iguala, which accomplished Mexican independence and permitted Iturbide on September 27, 1821, to enter triumphantly into the City of Mexico, the capital of the colony of New Spain, and to organize there a provisional government as a preliminary step to the establishment of an empire provided for in the plan of Iguala.

*Annexation of Chiapas to Mexico.*—The independence of Mexico was in fact accomplished on August 24, 1821, when Iturbide signed with the Viceroy Don Juan O'Donoju the Treaty of Cordova, as in that treaty the representative of the Spanish Government recognized the independence of Mexico.

The people of Guatemala had made no effort to throw off the Spanish yoke during the eleven years of the war of independence

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\* Executive Document No. 156, 47th Congress, 1st Session, Senate.

† Executive Document No. 154, 48th Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives.

in Mexico, and when they heard of the Plan of Iguala and of the Treaty of Cordova, they naturally considered that Mexican independence was a foregone conclusion, and having but little Spanish force among them, several prominent people of the capital, headed by the constituted authorities, proclaimed their independence from Spain on September 15, 1821.

The province of Chiapas, bordering on Mexico, anticipating Guatemala's action, had on the 4th of September, 1821, already proclaimed its independence from Spain and its annexation to Mexico, and on the 8th of the same month a solemn oath to maintain its independence was taken by the people and the authorities. On the 26th of that month Guatemala proclaimed its annexation to Mexico, a course followed soon afterwards by the other provinces, except Salvador.

After Iturbide entered the City of Mexico, he sent, under instructions dated December 27th, 1821, an army to Central America, under Colonel Don Vicente Filisola, to secure the independence of those provinces, to avoid having the enemy in his rear, and possibly with a view to insure the annexation of Central America to Mexico, as some uprisings against it had already taken place.

If that was one of Iturbide's objects, it was in accordance with the tendency of that time, which was in favor of consolidation of the weak colonies into large states which would command the respect of the world, and such tendency induced the union of New Granada, Venezuela and Ecuador into the Republic of Colombia. Colonel Filisola was at the City of San Salvador when he heard of the downfall of Iturbide's empire and of the establishment of the Republic, and he soon afterwards received instructions to return to Mexico.

In this case Iturbide followed the example of San Martin, who, after the Spaniards had been driven from the La Plata Provinces, thought it necessary to fight them in the adjoining countries, first in Chili and finally in Peru, the heart of the Spanish power in South America, and crossed with his army the high and difficult passes of the Cordilleras dividing his country from Chili; defeated the Spaniards at Chacabuco and Maipo, and finally invaded Peru. Bolivar following San Martin's example invaded Ecuador, after he had conquered New Granada and Venezuela, and finally joined hands with San Martin in Peru; and yet Iturbide's action has been called "conquest" by some of Guatemala's official representatives in Washington.

When Chiapas learned that the Act of Independence of Guate-

mala of September 15, 1821, had not provided for her annexation to Mexico, she declared on the 20th of that month her absolute separation from Guatemala, and demanded from Mexico the recognition of that absolute separation; and on the 12th of the following November the Mexican Government accepted the annexation of Chiapas. On the 22d of October of the same year the Junta of Chiapas appointed Señor Don Pedro José Solórzano as its representative to urge the recognition of its annexation to the Mexican Empire.

In compliance with the provisions of the Cordova treaty, a regency was established in Mexico, and that Government proclaimed, January 15, 1822, the permanent incorporation of Chiapas into the Mexican Empire, while the incorporation of Guatemala was not proclaimed until February 4th, of the same year. Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica had applied for annexation to Mexico and had been incorporated with the Empire before Guatemala; Salvador being the only one of the provinces which did not seek annexation.

The treaty of Cordova, which provided that a member of the royal family of Spain should be Emperor of Mexico, was rejected by the King of Spain, and Iturbide was then declared Emperor. When in March, 1823, his ephemeral Empire was overthrown, Guatemala proclaimed her independence from Mexico, and with the other three provinces, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, formed with Salvador an independent nation under the name of the "United Provinces of Central America," and the Republican Government of Mexico, which succeeded Iturbide's empire, instead of offering any resistance, promptly recognized the independence of the new nation, a fact which I think speaks well for the honorable principles of Mexico and her good-will toward her southeastern neighbor.

But the Province of Chiapas refused to secede from Mexico, and after discussing the question as to whether she would join her fortunes with Mexico or Guatemala, or establish herself as an independent nation, lawfully represented by a Provincial Supreme Junta, Chiapas voted freely on May 3, 1824, for her annexation to Mexico. After some discussion between the governments of Mexico and Central America, it was agreed to submit to a vote of the people of Chiapas the question involving her future autonomy; and the Mexican Congress solemnly declared by an Act dated May 26, 1824, that Chiapas was free to decide for herself her own fate. A vote was therefore taken, which was counted on the 12th of Sep-

tember, 1824, when it was found that out of a total number of 172,953 votes cast 96,829 were for the annexation to Mexico, 60,400 in favor of annexation to Central America, while 15,724 did not express any decided opinion on the question of annexation to either country; thus showing a large majority of her inhabitants to be in favor of her annexation to Mexico. There were at the time no Mexican forces in the province, as the Mexican Government had, on the 29th of May, 1823, ordered Colonel Codallos to leave the province, which he did on the 4th of November of that year, while the Central American Government had some troops in the Province of Chiapas during the election.

Mexico had proposed to Central America before the vote was taken that both Governments should withdraw from Chiapas the forces they had there and keep them on their respective frontiers, that the military forces of the Province should be disbanded, so that they should not influence the vote, and that each Government should appoint a commissioner to be present at the election for the purpose of securing fairness in counting the votes. Mexico complied with all these conditions, while Central America not only did not accept them, but pretended that they, and especially the presence of the Mexican Commissioner at the counting of the vote, nullified the election.

The Mexican Congress accepted the annexation of Chiapas, and in the first Mexican Constitution of October 4, 1824, she was named as one of the States forming the Mexican Confederation. The "United Provinces of Central America," however, did not explicitly assent to the vote of Chiapas and continued to claim that she was legally a part of their territory.

The Province of Chiapas must have been oppressed by Guatemala in colonial times, as it appears, from official papers, that what she most desired was to be separated from Guatemala, whatever might be the final fate of that country. It is not strange that under such circumstances she should cling to Mexico, as her only protection against a State which, as it seemed, she disliked so intensely.

*The Soconusco Question.*—The Province of Chiapas was divided into several counties, then called districts, and the district adjoining Guatemala on the southeast was Soconusco, which was considerably influenced by that State on account of its proximity to the City of Guatemala, from which it was only about 200 miles distant; while the distance from the City of Mexico was nearly 800 miles. Although Soconusco was only a single county or district of Chiapas,

Guatemala, in order to sustain her case against Mexico, often represented it as a separate province of equal importance to Chiapas.

On the 3d of May, 1824, Soconusco formally voted at the town of Tapachula, the county seat of that district, by a large plurality, for its annexation to Mexico; and this act was ratified by the decision, already mentioned, of the Supreme Junta of Chiapas of September 12, 1824, which declared the final annexation of that Province to Mexico.

But, on July 24th, 1824, an act was passed by some citizens of Tapachula, influenced by their friends in Guatemala, proclaiming the annexation of Soconusco to the United Provinces of Central America, which act was contested by Mexico, on the ground that the Province of Chiapas, including Soconusco, had already been annexed to Mexico, and that Soconusco had passed previously, on May 3d of that year, a Special Act of Annexation to that country. The Central American Government did not assent to these views, and the question was discussed at length by the two governments at the City of Mexico. Señor Juan de Dios Mayorga, the Central American Minister to Mexico, finally proposed, on August 24, 1825, as a dilatory measure, that the question should be decided by a formal treaty of boundaries to be negotiated between the two countries; that, in the meanwhile, Soconusco should remain in the condition in which she then was; that is, under her own municipal control; and that no troops of either country should occupy that district in the meantime. The Mexican Government, supposing that such treaty could be negotiated without unnecessary delay, agreed, on August 31, 1825, to that proposition, on condition that, besides withdrawing the Central American troops, which were already in Soconusco, the district should remain subject to its own municipal control; that neither country should tax the people or enlist men; and that those who had left the country for political reasons should be allowed to return unconditionally.

The Central American Congress approved, by an act dated October 31, 1825, the proposals of the Mexican Government, but added two conditions which were in conflict with them: first, that Soconusco should be governed by the laws of the United Provinces of Central America; and, second, that the officials of that district should be subject to the authority of Central America; and these additional conditions not being approved by Mexico, the proposed neutrality agreement of course failed.

Guatemala has held that these negotiations constituted a treaty between the two interested countries by which Mexico recognized

the neutrality of Soconusco, forgetting that there was no agreement, since each nation proposed different conditions, and that nothing was submitted to the Mexican Congress for its ratification, and that no treaty could be binding without such ratification.

Mexico at once sent to Guatemala an envoy, Señor Don Manuel Díez de Bonilla, who was afterwards succeeded by Señor Don Mariano Macedo, for the purpose of negotiating a boundary treaty; but the Central American Government refused to make any treaty; and the disturbed condition of things in Mexico left these matters pending until the Central American Union was dissolved in 1839. In the meantime, Soconusco had been occupied several times by Central American troops, and Guatemala had included it, in 1839, after the dissolution of the Central American Confederation, among the districts which formed her State of Los Altos; but when the Mexican Government learned in 1841 that the then Republic of Guatemala had sent troops to occupy Soconusco, it sent to Tapachula, in 1842, a brigade under Colonel Aguayo, holding that Central America had not complied with the agreement called the Neutrality of Soconusco, as it had been accepted by Mexico, and that the dissolution of the United Provinces of Central America had put an end to all claim of Guatemala to that district.

Guatemala was always careful not to point out the natural consequences of the disruption of the Central American Confederation. She had claimed the State of Chiapas, including Soconusco, one of its districts, as forming a part of that confederacy, because under Spanish rule Guatemala, with the five other Central American States, had constituted the colonial Government of Guatemala, as already stated; but when, in 1839, the Central American Confederacy was dissolved, all claims of Guatemala to Chiapas ended, for the simple reason that the nation to which Chiapas was supposed to belong, by the decree of the Spanish Government, was no longer in existence, and therefore could not claim any rights over Chiapas. Guatemala, however, continued to act as if she had succeeded to all the rights and powers of the Central American Confederacy, and as if the Province of Chiapas had been one of her districts or counties, and not a province with the same rights as Guatemala herself, which had the power to declare its independence, and which had long before expressed its determination to be a State of the Mexican Confederacy.

No weaker argument could be put forward in support of Guatemala's contention than supposing that Chiapas had joined the United Provinces of Central America after their secession from



Mexico in 1823. Had that been the case, she would have been one of those Provinces up to 1839, when the Confederation was dissolved, and after that she would have established herself as an independent nation, as did the other five States; and in that case Guatemala would not have had any more right to claim Chiapas as part of her territory than she had to claim Salvador, Honduras or any other of the remaining Central American nations.

To illustrate this more fully, let us suppose that Costa Rica, which adjoins Colombia, as Chiapas adjoins Mexico, had annexed herself to her neighbor, either when she seceded from Mexico, in 1823, or after the disruption of the United Provinces of Central America, in 1839. Could Guatemala, as a State having equal rights with Costa Rica, have claimed her sister State as a portion of her territory and contested the right of Costa Rica to decide her own fate? Chiapas had, as a Province of the Central American Government after its independence from Spain, exactly the same rights as Costa Rica and Guatemala.

The dissolution of the Central American Union brought about a very unsettled condition of things in Guatemala; and Soconusco, which had actually remained really a dependency of Central America and Guatemala, sought a remedy for the evils she was suffering in a union with Mexico; and, therefore, the Mayor of Tapachula and other officials addressed a communication to the Mexican Government on May 18, 1840, asking it to send troops to protect them against the encroachments of Guatemala. When the Mexican Government learned that the Republic of Guatemala had sent troops to occupy Soconusco, considering in the first place that Soconusco, as a district of Chiapas, had been lawfully annexed to Mexico since 1824, that the so-called neutrality agreement had no legal existence, and especially that the disruption of the United Provinces of Central America had ended all the rights that that country had ever claimed over Chiapas and Soconusco, it issued a decree on September 11, 1842, declaring that Soconusco belonged to Mexico, as a part of the State of Chiapas, and in consequence thereof sent Colonel Aguayo with a military force to occupy the district.

Guatemala protested against the sending of Mexican troops, and contended that Mexico had conquered Soconusco in violation of the so-called neutrality treaty. Since that time, however, the district has remained loyal to Mexico, and no attempt was ever made to renew its alliance with Guatemala.

*Boundary Negotiations.*—On account of the unsettled condition of things in Mexico, no action was taken on the boundary question

from 1842 to 1854, when Señor Don Juan Nepomuceno de Pereda was sent to Guatemala as Mexican Minister, for the purpose of adjusting that question. The Guatemalan Government was not disposed to make a treaty which should openly recognize the annexation of Chiapas to Mexico, and proposed that the boundaries between the two republics should continue to be those existing at the time, which was an indirect recognition of the annexation to Mexico of Chiapas and Soconusco, since they were then under Mexico's sovereignty; but for the purpose of nullifying that negotiation, the Guatemalan Government required that Mexico should pay the debt that Chiapas had incurred during the rule of Spain. Mexico could not accept that condition, because she had already assumed that debt, and, as Guatemala intended, the negotiations had no practical result.

In 1875 the Guatemalan Government sent Señor Don Ramon Uriarte as Minister to Mexico, and he proposed a draft of a treaty fixing the boundary line of Chiapas, which left to Mexico the greater portion of that State, and to Guatemala most of the district of Soconusco; which was another recognition by Guatemala that Chiapas belonged to Mexico. Señor Uriarte's draft renewed the discussion of this subject, and finally, on December 7, 1877, a treaty was signed at the City of Mexico for the purpose of making a preliminary survey of the region of country through which the boundary line should pass, and fixing astronomically the position of its main points. The survey was not finished in the time agreed upon in the treaty, and it was extended by a supplementary treaty signed on the 24th of May, 1878; but even this extension was not sufficient, and the Mexican Government suggested a new one, which was refused by Guatemala on the ground that the treaty had a concealed purpose, as was represented by Señor Montufar to Mr. Blaine in a letter dated at Washington, November 2, 1881.\* The fact that Guatemala agreed to that survey was also an indirect but distinct acknowledgment that Chiapas and Soconusco belonged to Mexico, because it would have been absurd to make an international survey of a country which clearly belonged to only one of the two contracting parties.

*Guatemala's Grounds to Claim Chiapas.*—To be fair I will mention the grounds upon which Guatemala based her claim to sovereignty over Chiapas and Soconusco, with their respective answers. They were the following:

Firstly, that Colonel Filisola, commanding the Mexican forces

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, No. 385, Señor Montufar to Mr. Blaine, November 2, 1881, page 604.

in Chiapas, had dissolved, in 1824, a Junta which had convened at the capital of that State. As soon as the Mexican Government learned of that action, Colonel Filisola was instructed to again convene the Junta, which he did, so that no ill results followed.

Secondly, the withdrawal of the Mexican forces from Chiapas, the ordering of them to remain at the frontier to disarm the forces belonging to that province, and the appointment of a Mexican representative to be present when the vote of the province was counted and declared. The withdrawal of the Mexican troops from Chiapas and the disarming of such troops as belonged to that province could not interfere at all with the free expression of the people's will; but on the contrary, was a guarantee of such freedom. The Commissioner appointed by the Mexican Government arrived in Chiapas after the vote had been cast, and he was present only while it was counted, Mexico having previously invited the United Provinces of Central America to send a commissioner for the same purpose.

Thirdly, the refusal of the Mexican Government to accept the proposal made to it by the Central American Government in 1824, to submit the question of Chiapas to the arbitration of the American Congress convened at Panama. As the Congress of Panama did not transact any business, had Mexico accepted the Central American proposal, the question would have remained unsettled.

Fourthly, the fact already stated, that between the first vote of Chiapas in favor of Mexico, in 1821, and the second and last one taken in 1824, some citizens in Tapachula proclaimed the annexation of that district to Guatemala, although their action was not sustained by that province, and that soon afterwards the annexation to Mexico was proclaimed in the same city, was another of the grounds on which Guatemala bases her claim to Soconusco.

Lastly, the military occupation of Soconusco by Mexico in 1842, in violation of the neutrality treaty, as was alleged.\*

Since Chiapas declared her adhesion to Mexico, we have had three foreign wars—one with France, in 1836; one with the United States, in 1846 and 1847, and another with France lasting from 1861 to 1867, and many civil wars—and had Chiapas had the slightest desire to secede from Mexico, she could have availed herself of those eventful and troubled periods to do so, which she could have done with perfect impunity, as the Mexican Govern-

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\* More detailed information on this subject will be found in a letter addressed by M. Romero to Mr. Frelinghuysen, as Secretary of State of the United States, on May 6, 1882, sent by President Arthur to the House of Representatives with his Message of May 6, 1884.—Ex. Doc. No. 154, 48th Congress, House of Representatives, 1st Session, pages 96 to 157.

ment was entirely powerless even to attempt to coerce her; but, far from that, Chiapas showed under those circumstances great patriotism and attachment to Mexico; and, making great sacrifices, she sent her quota of men to fight for the independence of Mexico during the French Intervention, besides heroically fighting the enemy in her own territory. This is the most conclusive proof that could be adduced that she forms a part of Mexico by her own act and of her own free will.

This fact is all the more remarkable when it is considered that, while Mexico was disturbed by a succession of foreign and civil wars, Guatemala had been comparatively at peace from the time when General Rafael Carrera assumed the Government after the disruption of the Central American Confederacy, thus offering a very striking and alluring contrast to her; but, far from showing any desire to go back to Central America or to Guatemala, Chiapas has remained loyal to Mexico; and she has always been represented in the Mexican Congress by her Senators and Representatives. In speaking of Chiapas, in this regard, I include of course Soconusco, as forming a part of that State.

But, whatever may have been the misfortunes of Mexico, we have been less unfortunate than Central America, because during all our civil wars no Mexican State ever thought of attempting separation, and they have all been not only contented, but even proud to belong to the Mexican Confederacy. During our foreign wars, in which the country was overrun by invading armies, the same feeling prevailed, except in Yucatan, which once attempted to establish its independence, but gave up the attempt without any serious action being taken by Mexico; and the idea of separation has never occurred to any of the other States. Unfortunately for Central America, the condition of things there was far different. When those States separated from Mexico in 1823 they established the Central American Confederacy. Civil war broke out fiercely among them, and finally the only way that could be found to restore peace was to establish the independence of each of them, no matter how small was its population. To an impartial observer of events, the day in which the Central American Confederacy will be restored seems yet somewhat distant.

Such was the condition of this question when General Garfield's administration came into power, with Mr. Blaine as Secretary of State, in March, 1881. Fortunately it was finally settled by the boundary treaty signed at the City of Mexico on September 27, 1882, by which both countries agreed upon a boundary line extend-

ing from the Pacific to the Atlantic, leaving Chiapas and Soconusco in Mexico. The line has been marked on the ground, some positions having been fixed astronomically by a mixed commission of engineers, whose field work is now completed.

There was a difference of opinion in marking the line, in so far as one of the rivers mentioned in the treaty of 1882 was concerned; but that difference was adjusted amicably and fairly by a convention signed at the City of Mexico on April 1st, 1895. So after a discussion of over half a century, this troublesome matter has been fully settled to the satisfaction of both parties concerned.

## II.—MEXICO NEVER THOUGHT OF CONQUERING GUATEMALA.

The Guatemalan Government made an attempt to persuade the Government at Washington, with the object of obtaining its assistance on her behalf, that Mexico was bent upon making a war of conquest, not only on Guatemala, but upon the whole of Central America. I should make this paper considerably longer than is desirable, were I to quote the many passages from official letters of Señor Don A. Ubico and Señor Don Lorenzo Montufar, representing the Guatemalan Government at Washington, in which it is made to appear that a war of conquest was really imminent. Even despatches from Doctor Cornelius A. Logan, then representing the United States in Guatemala, and Mr. Philip H. Morgan, their representative at the City of Mexico, conveyed the same impression.

Dr. Logan proved an earnest and firm friend of General Barrios, whom he aided with discretion and ability in attaining the two objects for which he desired the assistance of the United States Government, namely: firstly, the consolidation of the Central American States and, secondly, the settlement of the boundary question with Mexico; and he did this without manifesting much interest or appearing over-sanguine in regard to the former question, and acting always with great deliberation and apparent impartiality in regard to the latter. Dr. Logan is a man of great common sense and considerable ability and his services to General Barrios were therefore of great value.

Want of space forbids my quoting in detail all the passages of Dr. Logan's communication to Mr. Blaine, on both subjects, and I must therefore refer the reader to the official documents published among the "Papers on Foreign Relations of the United States," accompanying the President's Message of December 5, 1881.

Mr. Blaine had heard so often and from so many different

quarters the assertion that Mexico intended to make a war of conquest upon Guatemala and, in fact, upon all the Central American States, that he became fully convinced of its correctness, and he wrote to Mr. Morgan on June 21, 1881, as follows: \*

"It appears now as though the movement on the part of Mexico was not merely to obtain possession of the disputed territory, but to precipitate hostilities with Guatemala, with the ultimate view of extending her borders by actual conquest. Large bodies of Mexican troops are said to be on their way to Soconusco, and the exigency is reported to be so alarming that plans for national defense are uppermost in the minds of President Barrios and his advisers. Frequent border raids into Guatemalan territory have inflamed the passions of the residents of the frontier country, and the imminence of a collision is very great. Of the possible consequences of war it may be premature to speak, but the information possessed by the Department intimates the probable extension of hostilities to the other Central American States, and their eventual absorption into the Mexican Federal system."

These fears, I can assert, were entirely unfounded. Mexico never had the idea of conquering any other nation, and her position with regard to the United States makes her very desirous to avoid sanctioning in any way the rights of conquest. If she had had any designs against Central America she would not have allowed it to secede in 1823.†

The best proof which could be adduced to show how far from the truth were the representations of Guatemala on this subject, and how groundless were the fears entertained by the Government of the United States, is the fact that when the final boundary treaty was concluded at the City of Mexico on September 27, 1882, the Mexican Government agreed to let Guatemala have one of the richest portions of Soconusco, including the Port of Ocos, which Guatemala had been especially anxious to possess, as appears from the following passage of a letter addressed by Dr. Logan to Mr. Blaine on May 24, 1881: ‡

"A certain portion of Soconusco, a province of Chiapas, has become the modern bone of contention between the two countries, not so much because of the value of the territory, perhaps, as because of an important river, with a fair harbor on the Pacific, which traverses it."

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, No. 455 (142), Mr. Blaine to Mr. Morgan, May 24, 1881, page 104.

† The sensitiveness of some of Guatemala's public men regarding Mexico was so great that Señor Don Manuel Montufar, Guatemalan Chargé d'Affaires at Washington, in 1888 took serious exception to my saying at a private lecture, that, geographically speaking, Central America extended from the Isthmus of Tehuantepec to that of Panama, and that Mexico was therefore a Central American nation, as he was afraid that that assertion implied some designs of Mexico against the other Central American States. An article entitled "Mexico as a Central American State," published in the Bulletin of the American Geographical Society of New York, Vol. XXV., No. 1, March 31, 1894, pages 32 to 37, contains detailed information on this subject.

‡ Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, No. 76 (179), Mr. Logan to Mr. Blaine, May 24, 1881, page 104.

When the boundary treaty was signed, the border line of Soconusco had already been surveyed, its principal points astronomically fixed, and no mistake could therefore be made about it. The old boundary of Soconusco began at Encantada, a place a few miles northeast of Ocos, and therefore the river Tilapa, which empties into the Pacific at Ocos, with the harbor of Ocos, one of the best in Central America, was clearly in Mexican Territory.

General Barrios had a plantation in Soconusco, called "El Malacate," near the acknowledged boundary line of Guatemala, and he being very anxious to keep that property in his country, the Mexican Government agreed to this and consented to give up the old boundary line, which was the Petacalapa River, accepting instead, the Suchiate River, situated several miles to the northwest of the Petacalapa.

The line on the northern portion, touching Peten, was scarcely known, because that territory is not settled and had not been surveyed by Mexico. The Guatemalan Government had sent Señor Irungaray, a Guatemalan engineer, to survey that line, who afterwards went to the City of Mexico to assist the Guatemalan Minister in his boundary negotiations, and upon his report a line was proposed by Guatemala to the Mexican Government, which was accepted by Mexico. The surveys of that engineer proved afterwards to be quite incorrect, and long after the treaty had been ratified by both parties, and when the International Boundary Commission was surveying and marking the line agreed upon, the mistake that Guatemala had made was discovered. That mistake consisted in agreeing that the Usumacinta River should be the boundary line for a large portion of its course, when that river was actually located considerably inside the Guatemalan territory, and Guatemala claimed that the boundary ought to be another river, the Chixoy, which runs nearer the State of Tabasco in Mexico, and satisfied that the lines of the treaty of 1882 were agreed to by Guatemala under a mistake of her engineer, the Mexican Government finally agreed by a convention signed at the City of Mexico on April 1st, 1895, to accept Guatemala's contention; this fact showing also that Mexico was not disposed to deal with Guatemala unfairly.

In a long line of frontier, not surveyed and much less marked out, and almost uninhabited, it was natural that questions should arise about the nationality of certain localities. If this often happens when the line has been correctly surveyed and marked out, and traverses a territory comparatively settled, as is the case with

the boundary line between Mexico and the United States, regarding which such disputes frequently occur, it is easy to understand how something similar could happen on a line which was neither surveyed, marked out nor settled, and which was itself a matter in dispute, as was at that time the boundary line between Mexico and Guatemala. Guatemala, for instance, might think in good faith that a certain portion of land, located in Chiapas, was her own, and if she exercised there any rights of sovereignty, such as collecting taxes or arresting persons charged with having committed crime, etc., Mexico would naturally resent such an exercise of rights of sovereignty as an invasion of her territory, and so it happened that on a similar occasion the Mexican Government ordered some troops to Chiapas to protect her territory from invasion, but not to conquer Guatemala, and much less all Central America, and to this incident Mr. Blaine referred in his above dispatch to Mr. Morgan of June 21st, 1881. The number of troops sent at the time was very small for a war of conquest, being only about one thousand men, and they, I understand, never reached their destination. Upon this slender ground the Guatemalan Government worked to convince Mr. Blaine of the preposterous notion that a war was imminent, and that Mexico was bent upon conquering not only Guatemala, but all of Central America.

### III—DEVOTION TO ARBITRATION ENLISTED MR. BLAINE'S SYMPATHIES WITH GUATEMALA.

Soon after General Garfield's administration was organized in Washington, with Mr. Blaine as Secretary of State, the Guatemalan representative broached to him the two questions just referred to, which proved to be very acceptable to Mr. Blaine, because they afforded him great scope to exercise the influence of the United States in favor of arbitration in the international disputes of the American Republics, and because they exactly coincided with his own views, namely, the consolidation of the Central American Republics, and the adjustment of the boundaries with Mexico through the arbitration of the President of the United States.

Without desiring to disparage in any manner the abilities of Señor Ubico, the Guatemalan Minister in Washington, I imagined that he could not by himself have succeeded in interesting Mr. Blaine so greatly in the matter, and it was my belief that for this purpose he had the assistance and the services of a Venezuelan gentleman who had lived for many years in the United States, spoke the English language well, had great tact and was perfectly familiar



with his country and its public men. I refer to Señor Don Simon Camacho, who had been at various times connected with the Venezuelan Legation in Washington, acting often as *Chargé d'Affaires*. It was my belief that Señor Camacho showed Mr. Blaine how easy it was for him to aid in the consolidation of the five Central American States into a strong nation, and to assume the rôle of peacemaker between Guatemala and Mexico. My impression was confirmed by a conversation I had with Señor Camacho, in August, 1882, when he informed me that he had acted as intermediary and interpreter between Señor Ubico and Señor Montufar and Mr. Blaine, in the negotiations which culminated in the instructions sent by Mr. Blaine to Mr. Morgan on June 16, 1881, and which were continued until Mr. Blaine left the Department of State.

Mr. Blaine's views in favor of arbitration were assuredly both sincere and strong. In his letter of acceptance of the office of Secretary of State he had intimated that the new Administration might pursue such a policy as would "powerfully contribute at no distant day to the universal acceptance of the philanthropic and Christian principle of arbitration." One of the greatest aims, I might say dreams, of his life was to have arbitration accepted as a complete and permanent substitute for war, and as a way of ending international disputes. He stated before the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives at Washington, on April 27, 1882, during the investigation of the Garfield Administration Chilean policy, made by that Committee instituted by order of the House, that his object in proposing a conference of all the American nations, to meet in Washington, for which purpose he issued invitations during his first term as Secretary of State, "was to abolish war from this continent, and to make the law of arbitration everywhere dominant in the North and South American Continent."\* His plan failed at that time because he left the Cabinet before the Conference could meet; but when the American nations finally convened, from October, 1889, to April, 1890, in compliance with the Act of Congress of May 24, 1888, during his second incumbency of the State Department, he succeeded, though not without a great effort, in having a treaty of general arbitration accepted by most of the nations there represented, and I well remember, as I was there present, that the day the treaty was signed was one of the happiest of his life.†

When Señor Ubico represented the boundary question between Mexico and Guatemala as sure to lead to war unless the United States intervened, Mr. Blaine saw his first opportunity to make

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\* Report No. 1709, 47th Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives, page 240.

† See Note at end of article.

arbitration take the place of war, and so carry out the intimation made a few weeks before in his letter of acceptance of the State Department.

Besides, Mr. Blaine was at that time very anxious to show to the world the power of the United States, and he eagerly accepted any opportunity that might present itself and assist him in that direction. His policy was thought then to be aggressive, and his course contrasted thoroughly with the conservative one he pursued ten years later, when he became for the second time, Secretary of State during President Harrison's administration.

It is my opinion that he was allured by the idea of giving the assistance of the United States to Guatemala, for the bright purpose of forming a confederation of the Central American States, which, of course, was a very transcendent and desirable undertaking for any statesman to accomplish, and when to this scheme was connected the arbitration of the President of the United States in a question which he thought would otherwise certainly lead to war, the idea must have dazzled him. Very probably it was represented to him that in order to accomplish the Central American Union it was indispensable that Guatemala should remain an independent state, and that this would not be possible if Mexico was allowed to absorb her. From the time he became imbued with these ideas, Mr. Blaine seems to have been completely satisfied of their correctness, and he was not sufficiently prudent as to the way in which he should carry them out.

It is my opinion, too, that in taking the course he did, Mr. Blaine had no intention of doing anything unfriendly and much less inimical to Mexico. He professed, and I am sure he felt, a warm friendship for Mexico, and he tried to show it in various ways; but his dreams of international arbitration as a substitute for war, and the position he believed his country ought to assume in solving the great problems of the American continent, were, of course, stronger than his friendship for Mexico. I am sure, too, that throughout his whole course in this question, he thought he was acting as a friend of Mexico, and this theory explains a great many circumstances which would otherwise seem rather puzzling.

Public opinion in Mexico misunderstood Mr. Blaine's course, and he was accused of having taken the side of Guatemala in her controversy with Mexico. I firmly believe that this impression was incorrect and did injustice to him. It was not love for Guatemala, nor unfriendliness to Mexico that decided his policy, but his earnest desire to carry out his plan of arbitration, and to have his coun-

try take a leading part in the important questions of the American continent. The interests of Guatemala happened to be on that side, and hence the impression that he was advocating them.

It appears from the official correspondence, published by the United States Government, accompanying the President's message of December 5, 1881, that Señor Ubico had an interview with President Garfield in the presence of Mr. Blaine, about the middle of June, 1881, in which both subjects—the Central American Union and the boundary question with Mexico—were broached. He was probably assured that he would have the support of the Government of the United States in both cases, and he was encouraged in that interview to present them officially to the consideration of this Government. He did so in his letters of June 15th and 22d, 1881, the former concerning the boundary question, and the latter the Central American Union. My surmise about his interview with President Garfield appears from the two following passages of Señor Ubico's letter to Mr. Blaine of June 22, 1881: \*

"In the conference which I had the honor to hold with your Excellency during the course of last week, I had the pleasure to see that the people of Central America had not been mistaken in looking for assistance towards the United States, and that the views of the American Government were entirely favorable to the Central American Union. \* \* \* \* \*

"Besides, the generous utterances of your Excellency in behalf of this idea, as well as the words of the President himself, who expressed his hope to see the union accomplished before the end of his term, fully convinced me that such another opportunity will not present itself, and that more efficient, frank and just help from the United States Government could not be desired."

From what I have already said, it is quite clear that Mr. Blaine did not need any prompter to take the course he did on both of these questions, which proved to be so favorable to Guatemala's wishes and interests; but very probably to confirm him in this course, the Guatemalan agents thought it advisable to add some other inducements, for it was rumored at the time that Guatemala had offered to the United States as a consideration for their support of her claims, a coaling station in her territory, dependent on the accomplishment of the objects in view. Possibly something to that effect was embraced in a memorandum containing the conditions for a treaty on this subject between Guatemala and the United States, which Señor Ubico sent to Mr. Blaine with his letter just quoted, as appears from the following passage:

"I decided to hand to your Excellency, as a base for further proceedings, a memorandum containing the condition on which Central America would enter into a

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, No. 580, Señor Ubico to Mr. Blaine, June 22, 1881, page 602.

treaty with the United States, or, rather, I should say, the Government of Guatemala."

There is another circumstance which gives some ground for the belief that there was such an offer on the part of Guatemala. The New York *World* of August 5, 1882, stated that Guatemala had offered to the United States a naval station on her territory and a pecuniary indemnity, on condition that this Government would lend her its assistance in the boundary question with Mexico. Señor Camacho, who was well aware of what had happened, had an interview with a reporter of that paper, which was published in the issue of the 7th of August, in which he denied that any pecuniary indemnity had been asked; but by not denying anything of the other circumstance, he indirectly admitted its truth. Señor Montufar also published at the time a letter with the same purpose; but he failed to deny specifically either of the two assertions made.

As if what has been already stated was not inducement enough, the Guatemalan Government sought to obtain the influence of the United States by offering them the sovereignty over Soconusco, which Guatemala did not possess, and by threatening in case such offer was not accepted, to give it to some European power, which was supposed to be anxious to have it. Mr. Logan wrote in this regard to Mr. Blaine, in his letter number 183, dated 27th of May, 1881, as follows: \*

"My policy has been, and will be, an evasive one, until instructions from Washington may be received. Montufar, who is altogether the best informed man upon our political system in Central America, tries to argue away the probable objections to be interposed by our government against any unwarranted interference in the affairs of our neighbors, and especially the acquisition of territory, and rather regretfully, as it seemed to me, informed me that with the Democratic party in power the acquisition of Soconusco would be but a question of two days. All this amounts to nothing, however, except that when hope of assistance from the United States is abandoned, Guatemala will undoubtedly make this proposition to one of the European powers. Great Britain, France and Germany are striving for commercial supremacy in Central America, and there are some possibilities in the case of a character not favorable to our own interests."

Mr. Logan further said in a letter addressed to Mr. Blaine, No. 197, and dated at Guatemala, June 28, 1881: †

"The Guatemalan Government, in determining to cede Soconusco, or her right to it, at least, to a foreign power, hopes to put a stop in that way to the aggression of her powerful neighbor. The idea is not a bad one. I am confident that, as yet, no communication upon the subject with the representative of any power has taken place.

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, No. 79 (183), Mr. Logan to Mr. Blaine, May 27, 1881, page 107.

† Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, No. 82 (197), Mr. Logan to Mr. Blaine, June 28, 1881, page 110.

I have a belief, however, that should the United States decline any interest in these affairs, a proposition will be made in some other quarter. I shall watch the matter as closely as possible."

Mr. Blaine fully believed in that imaginary danger, as probably Señor Ubico on his side had made to him similar representations; and in a confidential letter to Mr. Morgan, dated June 21, 1881, he reasserted Mr. Logan's views in the following manner: \*

"You will observe in my instructions of the 16th instant and to-day, a guarded suggestion that there is a possibility of foreign complications growing out of the Soconusco dispute. For your confidential information on this point, I may observe that there is good reason to think that, if driven to extremities, Guatemala might cede her territorial rights in dispute to some European power. In view of the anxiety which several of these have shown of late to gain some footing, however slight, on the Pacific coast of the Isthmus, this is a contingency not to be overlooked in any dispassionate consideration of the question."

The same statement was made later to Mr. Morgan by Señor Don Manuel Herrera, Jr., the Guatemalan Minister to Mexico, which the former reported in his letter to Mr. Blaine, No. 253, of August 11, 1881, in the following terms:†

"I may add that on one occasion my colleague from Guatemala suggested the same possibility with regard to selling the right to Soconusco to some power—the United States or to a European Government. I replied that while I was not authorized to speak upon the subject, I might, however, on my own account, say that the United States did not want the territory and that they could not be well pleased to see it attached to the possessions of a European power."‡

After this subject had been fully treated and agreed upon verbally, as already stated, between Señor Ubico and Mr. Blaine, the former addressed a communication to the latter on the 15th of June, 1881, in reference to the boundary question with Mexico. It is extraordinary that in an official communication intended to be the basis of action of the United States Government, there should have been made so many gross errors, and even misrepresentations of facts in regard to a question which had been for the last sixty years a matter of history.

Señor Ubico tried to show in that letter that Mexico had been pursuing a policy of conquest toward Guatemala, which was aimed

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, Mr. Blaine to Mr. Morgan, No. 456 (143), June 21, 1881, page 770.

† Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, No. 469 (253), Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, August 11, 1881, page 795.

‡ On another occasion and possibly with a view to please the United States, Señor Don Francisco Lainfiesta, diplomatic representative from Guatemala, confirmed in a letter dated October 17, 1887, and signed in his official capacity with the prefix of Minister from Guatemala, which was published by the *Washington Post* of October 19, 1887, the report of an interview with him which had appeared in the issue of that paper of the 12th of the same month, in which he stated that Guatemala preferred to be annexed to the United States rather than to Spain, when nobody thought that there was even a possibility of its annexation to Spain.

at her complete destruction; that Guatemala had exhausted all pacific means to come to any peaceful adjustment, and that there was no other way to prevent her absorption by Mexico than for the United States to take Guatemala's part and force Mexico to come to terms. It is interesting to see how Señor Ubico presented this case to the Government of the United States, in his letter to Mr. Blaine of June 15, 1881:\*

"As soon as the Central American republics had shaken off the sway of Spain, Mexico—constituted then as an Empire by Iturbide—began to show its tendency to an increase of territory towards the south, by encroaching on the boundaries of the said republics. With that object the armies of the Mexican Empire passed through the whole of Guatemala, and were only stopped by the patriots of Salvador, who defeated them at a place which, in remembrance of such event, bears to this day the name of "Mejicanos." Guatemala lost, nevertheless, the two important provinces of Soconusco and Chiapas.

"Many years later the Central American territory was once more invaded by 400 men of the regular Mexican Federal Army, who were luckily driven from it. However, the slow and partial annexation of territory had not ceased one single day, showing well that if the form of government in Mexico has changed from the empire to the republic, the tendency to enlarge the territory and to overstep the boundaries towards the south has remained the same."

A comparison of the foregoing statements with the real facts of the case, which I have briefly stated in the beginning of this paper and which are recorded in history, shows the gross errors, serious mistakes and grave misstatements contained in Señor Ubico's letter.

It is proper, I think, to state here that the Guatemalan Minister in Mexico, who finally signed the boundary treaty between the two countries, acknowledged to Mr. Morgan that he did not believe that judgment could be rendered in favor of Guatemala if the question was submitted to arbitration, and that she claimed Chiapas and Soconusco only as a matter of pride,† which is equivalent to an acknowledgment that Guatemala had no rights to Chiapas and Soconusco. I will quote further on Mr. Morgan's version of Señor Herrera's statement.

Señor Ubico ended his letter to Mr. Blaine by the assertion that all means of conciliation had been exhausted, and by the following appeal to the Government of the United States to make such demonstration as might induce Mexico to respect the integrity of the Central American territory, meaning, of course, the territory of Guatemala:

"All peaceful means of conciliation appearing to be exhausted, my government sees

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\* *Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881.* No. 377, Señor Ubico to Mr. Blaine, June 15, 1881, page 598.

† *Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881.* No. 469 (255), Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, August 11, 1881, page 798.

no resource left but to appeal to that of the United States as the natural protector of the integrity of the Central American territory. \* \* \*

"The Government of Guatemala, from which I have special instructions on the subject, and the people of Central America will see with profound gratitude any demonstration that the Government of the United States may find fit to make to that of the Mexican Republic, that may induce this latter to respect the integrity of the Central American territory, and also lead to the cessation of an abnormal state of affairs which, unfortunately, has lasted too long already."

As this matter had been agreed upon beforehand, and Mr. Blaine was very anxious to act at once upon it, he answered Señor Ubico's letter on the following day (16th of June, 1881). In his answer he repeated, accepting its correctness, the statement made by the former, that the United States was the natural protector of Central American integrity. On the whole, Mr. Blaine's letter to Señor Ubico was couched in proper diplomatic language; since, while informing him that the President had instructed the United States Minister at the City of Mexico to urge the case, as Guatemala desired it, he added the following sentence: \*

"The President does not understand that your presentation of the causes and course of the long pending disagreement with Mexico, as to the respective rights or territorial limits of the two countries, in the districts of Soconusco and Chiapas, calls upon him for any expression of opinion as to the extent of the just jurisdiction of either. It is not the policy or the desire of this government to constitute itself the arbiter of the destinies in whole or part of its sister republics. It is its single aim to be the impartial friend of each and all and to be always ready to tender frank and earnest counsel, touching anything which may menace the peace and prosperity of its neighbors, and in this it conceives that it responds to its simple and natural duty as the founder and principal upholder of the principle of liberty and a republican form of Government upon the American continent."

Mr. Blaine ended his answer to Señor Ubico's letter of June 15th, by informing him that:

"The President has deemed it his duty to instruct the diplomatic representative of the United States in Mexico to set before that Government his conviction of the danger to republican principles which must ensue, should international boundaries be disrespected, or force resorted to in support of rights not made clear by recourse to the peaceful proceedings recognized by the modern code of intercourse."

Señor Ubico knew very well that he was not asking for the good offices of the United States Government as a common friend of Guatemala and Mexico, but that he desired the United States to take the part of Guatemala, as against Mexico, since what he asked for was the protection of this Government in favor of his country, as he stated in a letter which he addressed to Mr. Blaine on the 19th of June, 1881, acknowledging the receipt of Mr. Blaine's

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\* Foreign relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Blaine to Señor Ubico, No. 378, June 16, 1881, page 599.

communication to him of the 16th of the same month, in which the following sentence appears: \*

“ Your Excellency is pleased to inform me that my appeal to the United States Government for protection has not been disregarded.”

Señor Ubico had stated in his letter to Mr. Blaine, and Mr. Blaine had at once accepted the statement, that the United States was the natural protector of the integrity of the Central American territory. Señor Montufar, Señor Ubico's assistant and successor, went considerably further, and in a letter he addressed to Mr. Blaine on November 7, 1881, he said: †

“ The United States of America are the natural guardians of the soil of all America. They are the natural protectors of the integrity of the Continent, and history shows how nobly and worthily they have fulfilled their high missions.”

#### IV.—NEGOTIATIONS FOR ARBITRATION AT THE CITY OF MEXICO.

Before commenting upon the union of the Central American States I will review the negotiations carried on at the City of Mexico for the purpose of inducing the Mexican Government to submit its boundary question with Guatemala to the arbitration of the President of the United States.

*Mr. Blaine's Instructions to Mr. Morgan.*—Mr. Blaine inaugurated his policy, as Secretary of State, by writing a letter of instructions to Mr. Morgan on June 1, 1881, ‡ expressing the most friendly disposition towards Mexico, disclaiming all intention of acquiring any of her territory, and giving vent to the best wishes for the prosperity and welfare of Mexico and to an earnest desire to increase the commercial and political relations between the two republics. While I believe that such were Mr. Blaine's views about Mexico, the object of that letter was undoubtedly to inspire Mexico with confidence respecting the friendly policy of the new Administration; but it is matter of surmise whether that letter was written only with that object in view, or whether, when Mr. Blaine wrote it, he had fully made up his mind to assist Guatemala, and believed that it would pave the way for him to do so beginning with a friendly despatch to be taken as a mark of friendship, and serve to counteract any unpleasant impression which the Mexican Government might form when arbitration in the boundary question with Guatemala was suggested.

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Señor Ubico to Mr. Blaine, No. 379, June 19, 1881, page 600.

† Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Señor Montufar to Mr. Blaine, No. 386, November 7, 1881, page 613.

‡ Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. No. 452 (133), Mr. Blaine to Mr. Morgan, June 1, 1881, page 766.



The expressions of friendship contained in the letter referred to were so strong that the Mexican Minister at Washington, who had heard them often from Mr. Blaine's own lips, became so convinced of that friendship that his position towards his own Government became very difficult when it was discovered that Mr. Blaine had practically taken Guatemala's side of the question.

Mr. Blaine's second letter of instructions to Mr. Morgan, written only two weeks later, on June 16, 1881, of which I will presently speak, began by referring to the letter of the 1st of that month, which, he said, "so clearly amplified the spirit of good will that " animated the Government of the United States toward that of " Mexico, leaving no room for doubt as to the sincerity of that " friendship." In view of the impression that the Mexican Government had that Mr. Blaine showed great partiality for Guatemala, those expressions of friendship appeared to them rather strange.

Upon the strength of Señor Ubico's letter of June 15, 1881, Mr. Blaine wrote on the following day most remarkable instructions to Mr. Morgan, in which, accepting as his own the grossly erroneous and groundless allegations made by Señor Ubico against Mexico, he instructed the United States diplomatic representative to present them to the Mexican Government as the views of his Government, and this at the very moment when Mr. Blaine was proposing that the President should act as arbitrator in the boundary question between Mexico and Guatemala. Mr. Blaine wrote to Mr. Morgan in that letter of instructions, as follows: \*

"In the time of the empire, the forces of Iturbide overran a large part of the territory of what now constitutes Central America which had then recently thrown off the Spanish domination. † The changing fortunes of war resulted in the withdrawal of Mexican forces from most of that region, except the important provinces of Soconusco and Chiapas, which remained under their control. Since that time the boundaries between the two countries have never been adjusted upon a satisfactory basis. Mexico became a republic, did not forego claims based upon the imperial policy of conquest and absorption, while Guatemala resisting further progress of Mexican armies, and disputing step by step the conquests already made, has never been able to come to a decision with her more powerful neighbor, concerning the

\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Blaine to Mr. Morgan, No. 454 (138), June 16, 1881, page 766.

† When this incorrect statement of historical facts was read to Señor Mariscal, he replied:

"The undersigned replied that he was fully convinced the Government of the United States had been actuated in this matter by the most friendly and disinterested motives, but that it had been misled by misrepresentations of the question by Guatemala. He would overlook for the present certain errors in the statement of historical facts, as well as some events of more recent date, appearing in the note of the Hon. Secretary of State—errors attributable, without doubt, to the partial representations of the Guatemalan Government and the fact that the history of Mexico is not generally known, as he proposed to himself without delay to prepare a memorandum in which that which has passed at this interview shall be more clearly presented, the errors alluded to rectified, and certain ideas expressed by the Honorable Secretary of State, more fully and carefully considered. He limited himself for that time

relative extension of their jurisdiction in the disputed strip of territory lying between the Gulf of Tehuantepec and the Peninsula of Yucatan.

"Under these circumstances the government of Guatemala has made a formal application to the President of the United States to lend his good offices toward the restoration of a better state of feeling between the two republics. This application is made in frank and conciliatory terms, as to the natural protector of the rights and national integrity of the republican form of government existing so near our shores, and to which we are bound by so many ties of history and of material interests. This government can do no less than give friendly and considerate heed to the representations of Guatemala, even as it would be glad to do were the appeal made by Mexico, in the interest of justice and a better understanding."

It is true that a little further on, Mr. Blaine repeated in his instructions what he had said in answer to Señor Ubico, and which I have already quoted, denying that the President was a self-constituted arbitrator, as follows:

"It is not the present province of the Government of the United States to express an opinion as to the extent of either the Guatemalan or the Mexican claim to this region. It is not a self-constituted arbitrator of the destinies of either country, or of both, in this matter. It is simply the impartial friend of both, ready to tender frank and earnest counsel touching anything which may menace the peace and prosperity of its neighbors. It is, above all, anxious to do any and every thing which will tend to make stronger the natural union of the republics of the continent in the face of the tendencies of other and distant forms of government to influence the international affairs of Spanish America."

The assertion that the Government of the United States would not express an opinion as to the extent of either the Guatemalan or the Mexican claims in the disputed region, because it was not a self-constituted arbitrator of the destinies of either country, or of both, in that matter, and that it was simply the impartial friend of both, could have very little force, when it had just been asserted only a few lines before in the same paper, "that the armies of Mexico had, under the Empire, overrun a large portion of the territory which now constitutes Central America; that the changing fortunes of war resulted in the withdrawal of Mexican forces from most of that region; that the Mexican Republic did not forego claims based upon the imperial policy of conquest and absorption;

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to showing that at no period has the claim which Mexico maintains to the territory in dispute between her and Guatemala been considered as founded on force or conquest; an assertion which can be clearly demonstrated at a more opportune moment." \* \* \*

"In this statement several historical inaccuracies are apparent, one especially, which must be attributed to misinformation or an imperfect acquaintance with Mexican history. Even during the reign of Iturbide it was not by conquest, but in accordance with the free will and wishes of the inhabitants of Chiapas and Soconusco, that they were united to Mexico, as was equally the case with all the States of Central America, except San Salvador."

(Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, Memorandum of July 25, 1881, a conference held on July 9th, 1881, between Señor Mariscal and Mr. Morgan annexed to Mr. Morgan's letter to Mr. Blaine of August 5, 1881, pages 785 and 787.)

that Guatemala restrained further progress of Mexican armies, and disputed step by step the conquest already made; and that she had never been able to come to a decision with her more powerful neighbor, as to their boundary in the territory lying between the Gulf of Tehuantepec and the Peninsula of Yucatan," intimating that Mexico was the cause of such failure.

The tenor of this letter might have been more proper if it had been addressed to the Guatemalan Government. So far as the Mexican Government was concerned, it would have been far less offensive if the instructions to Mr. Morgan had been couched in the terms of the letter addressed by Mr. Blaine to Señor Ubico, already quoted.

In his letter of instruction, Mr. Blaine intimated that the President of the United States desired to act as arbitrator between Mexico and Guatemala, although the word arbitrator does not appear in that paper; but there could be no doubt that such was the meaning of the instruction, and everybody understood it in that way. Mr. Blaine himself called it in subsequent letters\* "an offer of arbitration." Mr. Morgan referred to it several times in the same manner. The Guatemalan Government and the Guatemalan Ministers in Washington and in the City of Mexico understood it as an offer of arbitration, and the Mexican Government took also the same view of it.

I can hardly understand how a man as experienced as Mr. Blaine, and holding as responsible an office as he then held, should take for granted the truth of all the assertions that Señor Ubico made in his communication to him, as if they were undoubted facts, and still more so that he should have repeated such statements of supposed facts, in his letter of instructions to the United States Minister in the City of Mexico, of June 16th of that year, and presented them, not as containing Guatemala's contention, but as the views of the United States Government about the boundary question between both countries; and it is still more surprising that he should have expressed such views in the very letter in which he proposed that Mexico should submit that question to the arbitration of the President of the United States. The first qualification for a judge is impartiality, but when the judge begins by accepting beforehand the contention of one of the parties in the dispute, without even hearing the other, it is not at all likely that the other party will be willing to submit the case to him, if there is, on his part, any possibility of preventing it.

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Blaine to Mr. Morgan, No 455 (142), June 21, page 768, and same to same, No. 482 (198), November 28, 1881, page 814.

The best way to show how completely Mr. Blaine adopted the assertions of Señor Ubico is to place both papers together, side by side, as I do below:

SEÑOR UBICO TO MR. BLAINE.

June 15<sup>o</sup> 1881.

"As soon as the Central American Republics had shaken off the sway of Spain, Mexico, constituted then as an empire by Iturbide, began to show its tendency to an increase of territory towards the south, by encroaching on the boundaries of said republics. With that object the armies of the Mexican Empire passed through the whole of Guatemala, and were only stopped by the patriots of Salvador, who defeated them at a place which, in remembrance of such event, bears to this day the name of "Mejicanos"; Guatemala lost, nevertheless, the two important provinces of Soconusco and Chiapas.

"Many years later the Central American territory was once more invaded by 400 men of the regular Mexican Federal Army, who were luckily driven from it. However, the slow and partial annexation of territory had not ceased one single day, showing well that, if the form of Government in Mexico has changed from the empire to the republic, the tendency to enlarge the territory and to overstep the boundaries towards the south, has remained the same."

INSTRUCTION OF MR. BLAINE TO  
MR. MORGAN.

June 16th, 1881.

"In the time of the empire, the forces of Iturbide overran a large part of the territory of what now constitutes Central America, which had then recently thrown off the Spanish domination. The changing fortunes of war resulted in the withdrawal of Mexican forces from most of that region, except the important provinces of Soconusco and Chiapas, which remained under their control. Since that time the boundaries between the two countries have never been adjusted upon a satisfactory basis. Mexico became a republic and did not forego claims based upon the imperial policy of conquest and absorption, while Guatemala resisting further progress of Mexican armies, and disputing step by step the conquests already made, has never been able to come to a decision with her more powerful neighbor, concerning the relative extension of their jurisdiction in the disputed strip of territory lying between the Gulf of Tehuantepec and the Peninsula of Yucatan."

Mr. Blaine's desire to have arbitration accepted by all the American nations, as a means of ending international disputes, caused him to act in this case as if all the American countries had already accepted his views, and therefore as if it was an international obligation of Mexico to accept the offer of arbitration of the President of the United States to settle a boundary dispute between herself and Guatemala; but in acting thus he overlooked the fact that while Article XXI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, of February 2, 1848—the only stipulation between the two countries regarding this subject—recommends pacific negotiations and arbitration for the settlement of any difficulties that may arise between Mexico and the United States, it does not provide that such means shall be final, but, on the contrary, foresees the

contingency of war, as a legitimate means of arriving at a settlement. It ought not to be lost sight of, besides, that the then pending difficulty was not a dispute between Mexico and the United States, but between Mexico and Guatemala.

It is, too, very remarkable that in his letter of instructions to the United States Minister to Mexico Mr. Blaine should have referred to another incident of the boundary question, which was in itself insignificant as compared with the main question, stating it as the position of Guatemala, not as his own, while in the main question he almost copied the words of the Guatemalan Minister and presented them as the conclusions of the United States Government.

The incident to which I have just referred is mentioned in the following guarded language in Mr. Blaine's instructions to Mr. Morgan of June 16, 1881, just quoted :

" It is alleged on behalf of Guatemala that diplomatic efforts, to come to a better understanding with Mexico, have proved unavailing ; that under a partial and preliminary accord, looking to the ascertainment of the limits in dispute, the Guatemalan surveying parties, sent out to study the land with a view to proposing a basis of definitive settlement, have been imprisoned by the Mexican authorities ; that Guatemalan agents for the taking of a census of the inhabitants of the territory in question have been dealt with in like summary manner ; and, in fine, that the Government of Mexico has slowly but steadily encroached upon the bordering country heretofore held by Guatemala, substituting the local authorities of Mexico for those already in possession, and so widening the area of contention."

In the case in question, Guatemala was the aggressor, as was stated by Señor Mariscal, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, to Mr. Morgan, in an interview which the latter reported to Mr. Blaine in his letter No. 240, of July 19, 1881, from which I shall presently quote.

The only explanation I can find for a man of Mr. Blaine's great ability making so serious a mistake, is his very earnest desire to have arbitration take the place of war to end international disputes. Allowance may also be made for the fact that he was then comparatively inexperienced in diplomatic affairs, his training as a great leader in the House of Representatives not being the one best calculated to fit him for the Department of State. When, eight years later, he was called again to the same responsible position, he showed remarkable tact and eminent qualifications for that high office.

Mr. Blaine took so great an interest in this question that he was not satisfied with his instructions to Mr. Morgan of June 16, 1881, which were both ample and sufficiently explicit to convey to the Mexican Government the wishes of his own, and they had not yet

reached the City of Mexico when he wrote, on June 21, 1881, a supplementary letter of instructions to Mr. Morgan, with a view, as he said, that his policy should be stated with more energy and conciseness. He added very little in that letter to what he had said before, and the fact of his writing it, only showed his great anxiety on the subject and the absolute credence he gave to the incorrect assertion of the Guatemalan representative. It is proper, however, to remark that Mr. Blaine agreed in his second letter that the boundary question should be settled by diplomatic negotiations, and that arbitration should be resorted to, only in case negotiations failed. In that letter he said:\*

“In addition to embodying the main points of my previous instruction, No. 138, you will make use of such temperate reasoning as will serve to show Señor Mariscal that we expect every effort to be made by his Government to avert a conflict with Guatemala by diplomatic means, or, these failing, by resort to arbitration.”

Such was precisely the ground taken by the Mexican Government, as will be seen further on.

To show how difficult, I may say impossible, it was for Mexico to accept arbitration in this case, I will state that it has been our habit—in fact, I understand it is the practice of all the Spanish-American republics—to begin our constitutions with a list of the States belonging to the Mexican Confederacy, and in all our constitutions, including the one now in force of February 5, 1857, Chiapas appears (Article 43) enumerated as one of the Mexican States, and therefore to agree to an arbitration which might result in the losing of that State to Mexico required more than a treaty—it required an amendment to our constitution.

For all practical, legal and constitutional purposes Chiapas was then as much a State of the Mexican Confederacy as New York, Louisiana or California is of the United States of America.

Señor Ubico was so sure that the United States Government had taken Guatemala's part in the boundary question, that he wrote to Señor Herrera that Mr. Blaine had stated to him that in case Mexico refused the arbitration and attempted to injure Guatemala, the United States would protect her by force, if necessary, as appears from a conversation between Señor Herrera and Mr. Morgan, reported by the latter to Mr. Blaine in his letter No. 259, of August 25, 1881, as follows:†

“The following day, 18th instant, Mr. Herrera called on me and informed me

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Blaine to Mr. Morgan, No. 455 (142), June 21, 1881, page 769.

† Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, No. 472 (259), August 25, 1881, page 802.

that the Guatemalan Minister at Washington had written him that you had stated to him that in case Mexico refused the proposed arbitration and attempted to harm Guatemala, the United States would protect her by force, if necessary. As I have before stated to you, I have on several occasions, when Mr. Herrera has spoken to me upon the question now pending between his country and Mexico, said to him that if I were in his place I would keep away from Señor Mariscal as much as possible, until Mexico should decide positively whether to accept the mediation of the United States or not. He always replied he would."

*Answer of the Mexican Government.*—As may be readily imagined, the impression produced in Mexico by Mr. Blaine's instructions, regarding arbitration, were very similar to those likely to be produced in this country, if a foreign Government should suggest a similar arbitration.

Mr. Morgan communicated to Señor Mariscal, on the 9th of July, 1881, Mr. Blaine's instructions, and in his letter to the Secretary of State, No. 232, dated at the City of Mexico on the 12th of that month, he reports the result of his interview in the following terms: \*

"In reply to the suggestions of the arbitrament of the President of the United States, he replied that whatever Mexico might be willing to accede to in the future, there was nothing at the present moment to arbitrate about. He said that Mexico had proposed to Guatemala to renew the convention for the appointment of a commission to survey the tract of country that was in dispute, that the question of the appointment of such a commission was pending, and that until that question should be decided there was, in reality, no dispute to submit to an arbitrator. He also declared that if there had been any delay in the appointment of such a commission, the fault was altogether with Guatemala. He also said that troops had been sent to the frontier, as the President had announced in his message to Congress, but that they were sent there for the purpose of protecting Mexican citizens, and not with any view of making war upon Guatemala. Mr. Mariscal was very earnest in his denials of any cause of complaint on the part of Guatemala, and as to the want of any necessity of an arbitration, so much so, that I deemed it proper, in order that there might be no possible question hereafter either as to the letter or the spirit of your instructions, or their interpretation by me, to read to Señor Mariscal your despatch, and offered to send him a copy thereof, which he accepted, and which I did."

To the decision expressed in the above extract the Mexican Government adhered, as was naturally to be expected—a decision so reasonable that Mr. Blaine himself had suggested it in the passage of his second letter of instructions to Mr. Morgan of June 21, 1881, which I have just quoted.

The Mexican Government naturally thought that Guatemala had not acted with candor towards Mexico, in applying for protection

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\* President's Message, May 6, 1884, 48th Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives, Ex. Doc. No. 154, Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, July 12, 1881, page 32.

to the United States while she was negotiating with Mexico for an amicable settlement of the same question, and the impression produced by the action of the United States is well stated, I think, in the following report made by Mr. Morgan in his letter to Mr. Blaine, No. 232, of July 12, 1881, of a conversation between Señor Mariscal and Señor Herrera on that subject, as reported to Mr. Morgan by the latter:

"Later in the afternoon Mr. Herrera informed me that he had seen Señor Mariscal, but that his interview with him had been far from a pleasant or satisfactory one. The substance of it was, according to Señor Mariscal, that wrong was all on the side of Guatemala; that there had been double dealing on her part; that while the negotiations were pending here, Guatemala had sought the intervention of the Washington Government, and that that intervention was intended by Guatemala as a menace to Mexico, all of which angered President Gonzalez, when he was informed of it; that he would know how to reply to President Garfield's suggestion of arbitration, declining the same without giving offense to the United States, and that he was then preparing a statement of the differences between the two countries, in reply to the copy of the dispatch which I had left with him, which he would send me, he thought, the following day."

Speaking of the feeling produced in Mexico by this offer of arbitration, Mr. Morgan informed Mr. Blaine in a letter, No. 297, November 2, 1881, as follows: \*

"The subject is on every tongue. It is constantly discussed by the press, and I feel it my duty to say that nothing has occurred since I have been here which has excited so much bad feeling against us as this proffer of arbitration. Say what I may to the contrary, it is considered as a menace."

In another letter from Mr. Morgan, dated at the City of Mexico July 19, 1881, No. 240, he reported to Mr. Blaine the position of the Mexican Government in regard to arbitration in the following terms: †

"Señor Mariscal manifested something of an excitement, I thought, and interrupted me by repeating the complaints which Mexico has, as he said, just grounds to make against Guatemala of her want of fair dealing, and, in fact, duplicity in pretending to negotiate a convention with him for the appointment of commissioners to survey the strip of territory which was in dispute, with the view of finally settling the boundaries between the two countries, while she had been secretly attempting to obtain the interference of the United States in their disputes, thus rendering the appointment of a commissioner unnecessary. He insisted upon it, that it was Guatemala that had committed acts of aggression upon Mexico, instead of Mexico upon Guatemala. He cited as a fact that it had been agreed between the two countries when the convention which had been entered into between them for the appointment of a commissioner to survey the territory in dispute—the convention which expired by limitation with-

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, No. 480 (297), November 2, 1881, page 812.

† Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881, Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, No. 462 (240), July 19, 1881, page 775.



out having accomplished its work—that pending the settlement of the boundary question, the line of demarcation should be at a certain point, and that not long since Guatemalan troops had gone beyond that point, had planted the Guatemalan flag upon territory which was conceded to be Mexican, and had demolished certain monuments which had been erected thereon.

“He (Señor Mariscal) replied that he did not think that the time for mediation had arrived, that a proposition for appointing a commissioner to survey the territory in dispute was then pending, and until that was disposed of he did not see what could be done; that Mexico had been insulted by Guatemala and that before any further negotiations were entered upon, matters should be replaced in their former position.”

Mr. Morgan ended his letter to Mr. Blaine, of July 19, 1881, with the following passage, in which he again reported the position of the Mexican Government on the Guatemalan boundary question, disavowing all intention on the part of Mexico to conquer Guatemala:

“Señor Mariscal replied that the present purpose of Mexico was to cause the Guatemalan troops to evacuate the territory which they had, in the opinion of the Mexican Government, occupied without authority, and to replace the ‘monuments,’ as he called them, in the state in which they were prior to their demolition. This done, he would then be ready to renew negotiations for the purpose of appointing a commission to survey the territory in dispute, in order that the question of boundary might be finally settled. He denied that Mexico had committed any act of aggression upon Guatemala, and distinctly disavowed any intention on the part of Mexico to use her troops for the purpose of conquering any portion of the territory belonging to Guatemala, and stated that of this disavowal I might inform you.”

*New Form of Arbitration Suggested by Mr. Morgan.*—Mr. Morgan was so thoroughly convinced that Mexico could not jeopardize her rights to Chiapas, that he suggested to Señor Herrera the idea that Mexico and Guatemala should agree that the question should be submitted to the arbitration of the President of the United States, on condition that he should decide it in favor of Mexico, which would be like making a mockery of arbitration. In his letter to Mr. Blaine, No. 253, dated August 11, 1881, Mr. Morgan wrote on this subject as follows: \*

“I then told him that I had had an interview with Señor Mariscal on yesterday, and without telling him of the suggestions I had made, I told him how I thought the matter should be managed in substance, as I stated it to Señor Mariscal. Mr. Herrera agreed with him. I then said to him that I fancied the great difficulty in the way was Chiapas, and I said to him almost in these terms: ‘Suppose Mexico would agree to the arbitration upon the condition verbally assented to, between the representatives of the two governments, although not expressed in the written proposition, that upon the question of title to Chiapas, the President of the United States was to decide that Chiapas belonged to Mexico, and therefore was not to be

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, No. 489 (252), August 11, 1881, page 797.

considered in the arbitration, would Guatemala consent thereto?' He replied in the affirmative. He said that it was a question of pride with his country, that he did not believe a judgment could be rendered in her favor thereon, and still they could not, of their own accord, give it up, but that if the United States were to say that Guatemala had no title now to Chiapas the decision would be acquiesced in.

"It occurs to me, therefore, that as the principal objection on the part of Mexico to submit to an arbitration is Chiapas, if Guatemala would consent in advance that a judgment should be rendered against her upon that point, an agreement to submit the other differences which exist between the two countries to arbitration could be arrived at."

This suggestion of Mr. Morgan, accepted by Señor Herrera, was approved by Mr. Blaine, in the following passage of the last letter of instruction to Mr. Morgan, No. 198, of November 28, 1881,\* because it carried out his scheme of arbitration:

"If the Government of Mexico should be disposed to accept an arbitration, limited in its point of settlement, as Mr. Herrera, the Guatemalan Minister, indicated would be acceptable to his Government, you will ask the assurance of the Mexican Government that, pending the discussion necessary to perfect such an arrangement, all hostile demonstration should be avoided, and if possible, that the Mexican troops should be withdrawn from the immediate vicinity of the disputed boundary. But this latter request you will not insist upon if it should be an obstacle to obtain the consent of Mexico to a limited arbitration."

In compliance with the above instructions, Mr. Morgan proposed again to the Mexican Government on December 29, 1881, a new and limited arbitration, as he reported in a letter to Mr. Frelinghuysen, No. 385, of January 10, 1882, but without success. The Mexican Government failed to answer that letter because the change of administration which in the meanwhile had taken place in Washington by the lamentable death of President Garfield, made it probable that the policy of forcing arbitration on Mexico would not be insisted upon.

Mr. Morgan had long before come to the conclusion that unless this Government was disposed to use force to induce Mexico to accept the arbitration of the United States, in the boundary question with Guatemala, it would be better to give up all attempts in favor of that solution of the question. He wrote to Mr. Blaine in his letter No. 272, of September 22, 1881, just quoted, as follows:†

"We parted on the best of terms, but he left me more than ever convinced that nothing would prevent a war between the two countries unless a positive position was taken by the United States, and I venture to suggest that unless the Government is

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\* *Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881.* Mr. Blaine to Mr. Morgan, No. 482 (198), November 28, 1881, page 816.

† *Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881.* Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, No. 477 (273), September 22, 1881, page 809.

prepared to announce to the Mexican Government that it will actively, if necessary, preserve the peace, it would be the part of wisdom on our side to leave the matter where it is. Negotiation of the subject will not benefit Guatemala, and you may depend upon it that what we have already done in this direction has not tended to the increase of the cordial relations which I know it is so much your desire to cultivate with this nation."

*Señor Herrera and Mr. Morgan.*—Mr. Morgan was greatly embarrassed and often annoyed by the peculiar manner in which Señor Herrera conducted himself in Mexico during these critical moments. He not only went often to see Señor Mariscal, with no other purpose than to increase the existing excitement and irritation, but he even proposed to him entirely new solutions of the difficulty, which were in conflict with the one accepted and recommended by Mr. Blaine at Guatemala's request, and which had naturally the result of undermining that solution.

Mr. Morgan complained to Mr. Blaine of Señor Herrera's interference, in the following passage of his letter, No. 232, of July 12, 1881:\*

"I informed Mr. Herrera that I had not received a telegram from you upon the subject. He said neither had he. He expressed to me his intention of going to see the President with the purpose of saying to him that unless the proposition which had been made, to submit the difference between the two countries to the arbitrament of the President of the United States was acceded to, he would leave the country and look to the United States for protection, and asked my advice on the matter."

"I replied that I could give him no official advice upon the subject of his seeing the President in person, instead of Señor Mariscal, but I asked him, suppose the President replied to him that the alternative which he had presented amounted to a declaration of war, and that he accepted it, what would he say? And in respect of his saying that he would look to the United States for protection, I told him that it appeared to me that this might be looked upon as a threat which I did not think would be effective; besides which, it was one which I did not think he was authorized to make, for I understood that up to now, at least, the President of the United States, while he had offered to mediate between the two countries, had not coupled this offer with an announcement to Mexico that she must accept this mediation or fight."

Señor Herrera informed Mr. Morgan that he had proposed to Señor Mariscal that Guatemala should cede all claims to Chiapas and Soconusco, upon Mexico's paying an indemnity to Guatemala therefor, and, commenting on that suggestion, Mr. Morgan expressed himself in his letter to Mr. Blaine of August 25, 1881, as follows:†

"In my opinion, Mr. Herrera made a mistake when he sought an interview with Señor Mariscal, and he made a greater one when he allowed himself to make the

\* President's Message, May 6, 1882, 48th Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives, Ex. Doc. No. 154, Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, No. 232, July 12, 1881, page 31.

† Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, No. 472 (259), August 25, 1881, page 802.

above proposition. Señor Mariscal, when he told him his suggestions might be entertained, said so only that negotiations might be resumed between them. Mexico has no money with which to purchase anything. When she wants it she will take it; and I submit to your better judgment whether, if the negotiations upon this subject are to be continued, Mr. Herrera should be advised to allow them to take their course, for you will, I think, readily perceive that if I make a proposition to the effect that the differences between the two countries be submitted to arbitration, and he makes a proposition to sell Guatemala's rights, we are playing at cross-purposes."

Mr. Morgan naturally complained of the action of Guatemala, that while the acceptance of the arbitration offer made by the United States to Mexico was pending, Guatemala should propose a new basis of agreement to Mexico, in complete disregard of said offer, and he wrote to Mr. Blaine in his letter No. 304, November 9, 1881, as follows:\*

"He (Señor Herrera) said that there was no truth in the statement. He, however, in the course of conversation, said that there was a proposition pending by which Guatemala was to receive a certain sum of money from Mexico and a portion of territory adjoining, as I understood him, British Honduras, and that, this agreed upon, surveyors were to be appointed upon whose report a boundary line between the two countries was to be established. I inquired of Señor Herrera whether this did not show that negotiations were going on between him and Señor Mariscal. His answer was evasive. I said to him I thought it was proper that I should know precisely how he was acting, as I considered it only due to my government that it should be informed of what was going on.

"I called his attention to the fact that great offence had been taken by the Mexican Government and the people at the offer of mediation which had been suggested by the United States, and I said it appeared to me, if Guatemala was in earnest in asking for friendly assistance, she should not do anything until that proffered assistance had been definitely acted upon. At all events, I said to him I should inform you of the negotiations which were being carried on between them."

To show how easily even men of sense and impartiality can become excited in the discussion of diplomatic questions, I will copy the following words of Mr. Morgan addressed to Señor Mariscal, as reported by him in his letter to Mr. Blaine, No. 272, September 22, 1881: †

"Laughingly I said that if the Mexican appetite for conquest had been excited, it was probably fortunate for us that Guatemala, and not Texas, was the meat it craved."

*Mr. Blaine's Final Instructions.*—When Mr. Blaine learned of the effect produced in Mexico by his offer of arbitration, and especially when he heard the Mexican side of the question, ably presented by Señor Mariscal, he ought to have brought the matter to an end by

\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, No. 418 (304), November 9, 1881, page 813.

† Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Morgan to Mr. Blaine, No. 477 (273), September 22, 1881, page 809.

not pressing it any further, as it would have been too much to expect him to acknowledge frankly his mistake; but instead of acting so, he wrote another letter to Mr. Morgan, almost the last one he signed during his first term as Secretary of State, dated November 28, 1881, which shows very plainly the great interest he took in that question, that his views had not been materially altered by the representation made by Mexico, and how profound was the pain caused by the conduct of the Mexican Government in declining to accept arbitration, and that he still was afraid of acts of aggression on the part of Mexico.

Mr. Blaine closed his last letter of instructions to Mr. Morgan of November 28, 1881, with the following sentence:\*

"If this government is expected to infer from the language of Señor Mariscal that the prospects of such a result is not agreeable to the policy of Mexico, and that the interest which the United States has always manifested in its consummation renders unwelcome the friendly intervention which we have offered, I can only say that it deepens the regret with which we will learn the decision of the Mexican Government, and compels me to declare that the Government of the United States will consider a hostile demonstration against Guatemala, for the avowed purpose or with the certain result of weakening her power in such an effort, as an act not in consonance with the position and character of Mexico, not in harmony with the friendly relations existing between us, and injurious to the best interests of all the republics of this continent."

*Guatemala's Last Effort.*—Of course the Guatemalan Government was overjoyed at the action of the United States, both in the matter of the boundary question with Mexico and in the consolidation of the Central American Republics; and, not satisfied with the services of Señor Ubico alone, it sent to Washington as a special negotiator Señor Montufar, who was considered to be one of the ablest men in Central America, and who had been for some time acting as Secretary of State of Guatemala. Señor Montufar presented his credentials as Guatemalan Minister in special mission, November 1, 1881, and continued to hold that office until January 20th, 1882. When President Arthur's administration was established Señor Montufar was again received, on the 4th of April, 1882, as the regular representative from Guatemala in Washington to succeed Señor Ubico.

During Mr. Blaine's incumbency of the State Department and while Señor Montufar was Guatemala's envoy in special mission, the latter addressed three letters to Mr. Blaine, dated at Washington on the 2d, 7th and 21st of November, 1881, in which he discussed

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Blaine to Mr. Morgan, No. 482 (198), November 28, 1881, page 817.

the boundary question between his country and Mexico, going into many details and making assertions which were altogether groundless and which departed from the truth even in a greater degree than those contained in Señor Ubico's letter to Mr. Blaine of June 15, 1881. The principal object of those letters was to show that Mexico was absorbing Guatemala by piecemeal, under the plea that the boundaries of Soconusco were indefinite; and that Mexico threatened to absorb in the same way the whole of Central America. What has already been said on this subject, and what has happened since, shows how groundless such assertions were.

*Friendly Settlement of the Boundary Question.*—When the administration changed in Washington and Mr. Blaine left the Cabinet, it was announced in the newspapers that the foreign policy of the United States had undergone a material change, especially in so far as the boundary question between Mexico and Guatemala and the union of the Central American States were concerned. Señor Ubico could not believe this to be possible, and in a letter which he addressed to Mr. Frelinghuysen as Secretary of State on February 4, 1882,\* he characterized the announcement as an error generally prevailing. He believed that the change, if any, would be in the form and manner of carrying out the national policy, and he demanded that the State Department "should transmit suitable explanations to Mr. Morgan and advise him (Señor Ubico) of the purport of said explanations," intimating, of course, that such explanations would be to the effect that the policy of this government as to the boundary question between Guatemala and Mexico had undergone no change.

The new administration, established in Washington under President Arthur, called to the State Department a man of conservative ideas, remarkable for his profound sense of justice, his fair-mindedness and his honorable principles, who did not share Mr. Blaine's view on that subject, but thought that the best policy for this Government to pursue was to act as a common friend of both countries, equally interested in the welfare of both Guatemala and of Mexico, and not to volunteer the arbitration of the President of the United States, unless both countries, equally interested in the affair, should jointly ask for it. This wise policy was much more successful in settling the question than Mr. Blaine's had been, since his interference only caused irritation and distrust; while Mr. Frelinghuysen's policy brought about the honorable and amicable settlement of the question by President Barrios himself, as I will presently state.

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\* President's message of February 17, 1882. No. 18, Señor Ubico to Mr. Frelinghuysen, February 4, 1882, page 23.

When the Guatemalan Government learned that a change had really taken place in the foreign policy of this government, General Barrios could hardly believe it to be true, and being naturally very suspicious, he was afraid that he might be the subject of deception on the part of some one, and, possibly, of his own representatives in the United States, so, with a view to dispel all doubts and ascertain what was the real condition of things, he made up his mind to come to Washington, fully authorized by the Guatemalan Congress to settle the boundary question; and when he became satisfied that Guatemala could no longer count on the active interference in her behalf of the Government of the United States, he decided to sign with me, as the representative of Mexico, a preliminary agreement, which we executed in the City of New York on August 12th, 1892, in which he acknowledged on behalf of Guatemala, that Chiapas and Soconusco belonged to Mexico. That preliminary agreement was followed by the treaty of boundaries, signed at the City of Mexico on September 27th of that year. In a paper recently published by me I related the details of that agreement, and here I will only say that this consummation is, I think, a conclusive proof of the rights of Mexico in the premises.

#### V.—UNION OF THE CENTRAL AMERICAN STATES.

The presentation of this case would not be complete if I failed to mention the other object which so greatly interested the Guatemalan Government, that is, the consolidation of the Central American Republics. As I have already stated, they remained united after their secession from Mexico, in 1823, until 1839, and during that period Central America was the scene of the wildest turbulence, disorder and civil war. The clashing of party interests, the adoption of popular institutions without the requisite political education, the personal ambition of the leaders and the conflicting interests of the different States, were the principal causes for such disturbances, and the situation finally became so untenable that all the States agreed to secede from the Central American Confederacy, and since that time they have been comparatively at peace.

*Feeling in Central America about the Union.*—It is true that none of the five Central American States is large enough to form an independent nation, and that they cannot expect to command great respect nor to exercise the influence to which they are entitled as long as they remain separated; while it is clearly to their convenience, and certainly to their interest, having similar con-

ditions and destinies, to form a consolidation among themselves, a thing which I am sure is one of the certainties in the near future; but its execution has, for the present, serious obstacles.

Public opinion seems to be widely divided in Central America about the union. Some, although few, hold that it must be carried out by any means, including the use of force, while others, not very large in numbers, are entirely opposed to that view. A majority of the inhabitants, in my opinion, hold a conservative view, and are in favor of the union if it can be carried out by peaceful means and mutual concert, and provided the rights of the inhabitants are guaranteed in such a way that they will not be subject to the abuses which unfortunately have been so frequent in those States.

Theoretically at least, the four other States of Central America are as anxious as Guatemala to unite under one government. They meet in conference for that purpose, sign treaties, accept preliminary bases of union, and go so far as to fix a date when the permanent union shall take place; giving besides to all the citizens of the other republics the same rights as to their own citizens. But when the time comes to carry these solemn pledges into effect some of the States find a plausible excuse to back out; and the union has not, so far, been accomplished.

If there are any two Central American States which ought to be united they are Costa Rica and Nicaragua, because there is more affinity between them than among the other States, they occupy contiguous territory, they have the great bond of union of their respective rights to the Nicaragua Canal, and they represent in Central America the element considered more antagonistic to Guatemala, and notwithstanding all this, there are no signs that such a union is among the near possibilities; and, when these two States cannot unite and become one nation, the difficulties in the way of uniting the five Central American States are apparent. But the very question of the Nicaragua Canal seems to be a bone of contention between these two States, as Costa Rica holds that under the boundary treaty of 1858, as interpreted by the award of President Cleveland, of 1888, the San Juan River is the dividing line, and the canal intends to use that river as its northern terminus, while Nicaragua contends, as I understand, that Costa Rica has no rights to the canal.

When a nation has enjoyed its independence, it is difficult that it should give it up and submit itself to be a portion of a larger nation. The experience of the Central American States during the existence of the United Province of Central America has not left



such memories as would make them very eager to renew that union. But the stumbling block, in my opinion, has been the preponderance of Guatemala over the other States, which would make the union practically the annexation to Guatemala of the other States. Some of them were in the enjoyment of personal rights that the people of Guatemala did not have, under the Government of President Barrios, and it is not strange, therefore, that they were not disposed to give up their rights and liberties. There are other objections to the union, although of minor consequence, which were stated by Señor Ubico in his letter to Mr. Blaine of June 22, 1881, which I will presently quote.

Guatemala being, next to Nicaragua, the largest of the five Central American States in superficial area and the largest in population—the number of her inhabitants being almost as large as that of all the other four States put together—the union would mean the absolute supremacy of Guatemala over the others, a result which they were not yet quite ready to accept.

The idea has sometimes been suggested, with a view to diminish the power of Guatemala and establish a better equilibrium between all the Central American States, that Guatemala should be divided into two States, which would leave each of about the same size as the other four. But, in my opinion, this would not be an acceptable solution, because, while the purpose is to form a larger nation out of small States, it would be absurd to begin by subdividing one of them. Besides, Guatemala would naturally never consent to a subdivision of her territory, and even were that division accomplished it would not bring about the desired result, as the two Guatemalan States would in all probability act in concert in all cases affecting the union.

It is not likely, in my opinion, that the union of the Central American States will take place until Guatemala has such an enlightened, just and patriotic government as to inspire the other States with confidence in her fairness, justice and high-minded views, and thus make it clearly to their interest to sacrifice their respective independence for the purpose of constituting a greater nation, as members of which they would enjoy more advantages than they do now, and until the union is made in such manner as to insure as far as possible the rights of property and liberty of the inhabitants and the independence of the States in their home concerns. Fortunately, the administration of General Reyna Barrios has inaugurated an enlightened policy which may be the beginning of such an era.

*Negotiations in Washington about the Central American Union.—*

The preceding concise remarks about the question of uniting the five Central American States into one nation will make it easier to appreciate what took place in Washington about this subject in June, 1881. After Señor Ubico's interview with the President and Mr. Blaine, when the former expressed his desire that the consolidation of the Central American States should take place during his administration, as stated before, he sent to Mr. Blaine an official letter on the subject, to which I have already alluded, dated at New York, June 22, 1881, which was remarkable for the many important admissions it contained; and he also submitted a memorandum of a treaty between Guatemala and the United States, under which the union should be accomplished. Señor Ubico stated in that letter that there were many obstacles to the union, but he only mentioned two: First, the selfish interest of many men and their attachment to high-sounding titles and honors, which would disappear with the small governments; and, second, the certainty that all the bad elements existing in the country would combine against any attempt to realize the union; but, in my opinion, he failed to mention the real difficulties of the undertaking. While there might be opposition to the union from the presidential incumbents and other high functionaries of the other four Central American States, an objection which Guatemala has tried to overcome by proposing that the President of each State should act consecutively as President of the Union for one term, it would have been folly to attribute to that reason alone the failure of the many and earnest efforts made to attain that end.

Señor Ubico understood perfectly well that the union of the Central American States, as it was then intended to be carried out, and as General Barrios tried to carry it out some time later, meant the annexation to Guatemala of the other four Central American States, and so he stated in the following passage of his letter to Mr. Blaine of June 22, 1881: \*

“Guatemala, from the fact of its having more than half of the population of Central America, and of its having enjoyed peace, but with one short interruption, during the last thirty years, possessing further more elements of all kinds than any one or even all of her sister republics, and being governed by men who are respected all through the land, is the only one of the Central American republics able to carry out this work into execution. The Governments of Salvador and Honduras are her warm friends, so that it may be said that Guatemala can speak also for the governments of the two last mentioned republics.”

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Señor Ubico to Mr. Blaine, No. 380, June 22 1881, page 601.

The idea entertained by Guatemala that she represented all the Central American republics was so strong that one of her diplomatic representatives in Washington, Señor Don Francisco Lainfiesta, who represented at the same time Salvador and Honduras, had printed on his official cards the heading, "Legacion Centroamericana" (Central American Legation), notwithstanding that it had not been customary to put any heading on such cards; besides which, the title was incorrect, as there was no nation called Central America, and he could not represent what did not exist.

The Guatemalan Government was well aware that the union of the Central American republics could not then be accomplished without the material assistance of a strong foreign government, that is, without coercing the States intended to form that union. Señor Ubico clearly admitted this in his letter to Mr. Blaine of June 22, 1881, just quoted, in the following terms:

"As matters stand to-day the work could be achieved without any foreign aid, for the party is strong enough and powerful enough for that, but it would require great sacrifices from the land and the loss of human life. The help and influence of a strong foreign government are therefore needed. They would act by their presence alone, and by their moral weight would quickly and favorably decide the question. That government can be no other than the United States."

There does not appear among the official documents published by the United States Government any answer to the foregoing letter of Señor Ubico's, but an answer, if not given, was hardly necessary, as Mr. Blaine was so anxious to set forth the President's views on the projected Central American Union that he did so, even before receiving Señor Ubico's special letter on that subject. That letter of Señor Ubico's was, as I have already mentioned, dated at New York on the 22d of June, 1881; and Mr. Blaine had already said in his letter of June 16th, in answer to Señor Ubico's letter of the day before, which related only to the boundary question with Mexico and did not touch upon the other subject, the following: \*

"It (the Government of the United States) is especially anxious in the pursuance of this broad policy, to see the Central American republics more securely joined than they have been of late years in protection of their common interests. It feels that anything that may lessen the good will and harmony so much to be desired between the republics of the American isthmus, must in the end disastrously affect their mutual well-being. The responsibility for the maintenance of this common attitude of united strength is, in the President's conception, shared by all, and rests no less upon the strong states than upon the weak."

Even after Mr. Blaine had learned that the arbitration of the

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Blaine to Señor Ubico, No. 378, June 16, 1881, page 599.

President of the United States had not been accepted by Mexico, he still showed the greatest interest in the consolidation of the Central American States, and in his last letter to Mr. Morgan of November 28, 1881, in which he reviewed the whole question, that is, in so far as it concerned his own position and the objections presented by Mexico, he said with reference to the union : \*

“ But in reference to the union of the Central American republics under one federal government, the United States is ready to avow that no subject appeals more strongly to its sympathy nor more decidedly to its judgment ; nor is this a new policy. For many years this government has urged upon the Central American States the importance of such a union to the creation of a well-ordered and constitutionally governed republic, and our ministers have been instructed to impress this upon the individual governments to which they have been accredited, and to the Central American statesmen with whom they have been associated. As we have always cherished the belief that in this effort we had the sincere sympathy and cordial co-operation of the Mexican Government, under the conviction that the future of the people of Central America was absolutely dependent upon the establishment of a federal government which would give strength abroad and maintain peace at home, our chief motive in the recent communications to Mexico was to prevent the diminution, either political or territorial, of any one of these states, or the disturbance of their exterior relations, in order that, trusting to the joining aid and friendship of Mexico and the United States, they might be encouraged to persist in their effort to establish a government which would, both for their advantage and ours, represent their combined wealth, intelligence and character.”

The diplomatic representatives of the United States in Central America have naturally always assisted Guatemala in her efforts to establish the Union. For several years the same representative was accredited to the five Central American States, with residence at the City of Guatemala. As Guatemala is the largest of those States in population and wealth and its capital the largest and most comfortable city in Central America, they naturally preferred to remain there, and seldom, if ever, visited the other States. The result was, that the Guatemalan statesmen, who are able men, of great adroitness and exceedingly plausible, always influence in favor of Guatemala the representatives of the United States, and as a consequence of this the latter were always ready, generally in perfect good faith, to espouse Guatemala's cause, to the detriment of the other States, of which they knew comparatively little, and some of them, like Mr. Logan, did so very ably and successfully.

The interests of the United States would, in my opinion, be better subserved, if it had a representative in each of these States, as in that case it could better understand their relative conditions

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Mr. Blaine to Mr. Morgan, No. 482 (198) November 28, 1881, page 816.

and interests. The Act of Congress of July 16, 1892, which established a legation for Guatemala and Honduras, and another for Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Salvador, was a step in the right direction.

*General Barrios Undertook to Form the Union by Force.*—The union of the Central American States, as it was contemplated by President Barrios of Guatemala, in 1881, and as he tried to carry it out in April, 1885, was almost, if not quite, impossible. He ruled Guatemala with an iron hand, and took particular pleasure in humiliating and vexing the higher classes and the most prominent citizens, and no one considered his life or his property safe under his rule; while some of the other States were blessed with governments which in some cases managed public affairs honestly, which had generally some respect for life and property, and which allowed the enjoyment of some liberties, such as free speech and a comparatively free press, liberties which were entirely ignored in Guatemala.

General Barrios was a truly remarkable man. While he ruled Guatemala with an iron hand and did many things which would mark him as a tyrant of the worst kind, ignoring completely the rights of the people and especially of the higher classes, he had some remarkable traits of character which enabled him to accomplish a great deal of good for his country. He had an indomitable will, and he was earnestly desirous of promoting education and public improvements; and his especial aim was to destroy the power of the church or conservative party, which was as strong in Guatemala as it had ever been in Mexico, and this explains why he never lost any opportunity to humiliate the higher classes, which constituted the stronghold of that party. The time has not yet come to pass an impartial judgment on his administration, but, while he had a great many faults, I think he possessed also many redeeming qualities.

Salvador and Honduras, being the States nearest to Guatemala, and smaller than herself, had always been more or less under her control. Under President Barrios' rule, Guatemala designated the President of each of those States, and in that way actually controlled them, a statement corroborated by a passage of Señor Ubico's letter to Mr. Blaine of June 22, 1881, which I shall presently quote.\* For the same reason Salvador and Honduras were generally represented at Washington by the Minister from Guatemala.

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\* Foreign Relations of the United States for 1881. Señor Ubico to Mr. Blaine, No. 380, June 22, 1881, page 600.

When a President came into power in either Salvador or Honduras who was not subservient to General Barrios, all he had to do was to assist the new ruler's political enemies—always plenty and ready—without openly committing himself, and a revolution was at once inaugurated which ended with the overthrow of the recalcitrant President and the establishment of a President who owed his office to Guatemala's assistance and had to be subservient to her ruler. If the new President showed any signs of independence, he was summarily and easily overthrown by the same process that he had used to overthrow his predecessor.

Perhaps, in the then existing conditions of things in Central America, President Barrios believed that he was bound to act thus in self-defence; because if a Government were established in Salvador or Honduras, which was not partial, or at least friendly to Guatemala, it might assist the Guatemalan refugees and malcontents to overthrow the Guatemalan Government, just as Guatemala had done towards her neighboring States.

But even Salvador and Honduras had at that time far better governments than Guatemala, so far as respect for life and property and the enjoyment of certain liberties were concerned, because General Barrios could not interfere in all the details of the internal administration of those States, and because, at least, in Salvador, although a large portion of its inhabitants are Indians, a great many of them are small land-owners and, having some education, would not stand an arbitrary government which would trample upon their rights and destroy their liberties.

What occurred in the case of Salvador, when General Barrios tried to force the Union upon the other States and which I will presently mention, shows the correctness of this statement.

The truth was that the union of the Central American States meant, during General Barrios' régime, the annexation to Guatemala of the other four States and the extension to them of his own arbitrary rule—a result which they dreaded exceedingly, and they therefore decided to fight it to the bitter end, as was shown in the case of Salvador.

When General Barrios became satisfied, after the change of administration at Washington, that he could not have the active support of the United States in the annexation to Guatemala of the other Central American States, or the consolidation of Central America, as it was then called, relying on the support of Salvador and Honduras which were pledged to him because their Presidents had been placed in power by himself, he obtained from the Guate-

malan Congress a decree on March 6, 1885, establishing the Central American Union under a military chief with supreme command, that chief being of course General Barrios himself, without the other States having been represented or heard on the subject, and treating as traitors all those who should oppose that scheme.

Before General Barrios took that step he had received the most formal pledge from President Zaldivar, of Salvador, that he would follow his lead in proclaiming the union by force of the Central American States; but, when Zaldivar tried to comply with his promises, the whole people rose like one man to resist such a course, and he was forced to oppose General Barrios, who, incensed at what he considered an act of treachery and desiring to punish it, marched against San Salvador, defeated Zaldivar's forces at El Coco, and was killed at the Battle of Chalchuapa on April 2, 1895.

Nicaragua and Costa Rica, considering themselves especially threatened by a war of conquest on the part of Guatemala, prepared for the struggle and joined Salvador in an alliance signed at Santa Ana to resist his invasion and forces from Nicaragua and Costa Rica invaded Honduras, thus preventing President Bogran, who had been installed by General Barrios and was acting in concert with him, from aiding him when the crisis came; and after Bogran heard of Barrios' death at Chalchuapa he allowed the allied forces to pass through Honduras territory to the seat of war. Notwithstanding that Guatemala was by far stronger than Salvador, the Salvadorians resisted her armies so effectually, as to defeat Guatemala by the death of General Barrios, and consequently the plan of consolidation. This is a conclusive proof of the feelings and views of the Central American States toward the union when intended to be carried out by force.

*Present Condition of the Central American Union.*—The first step towards a peaceful union was the organization of the Greater Republic of Central America, agreed upon, July 20, 1895, by the Treaty signed at Amapala, between the Republics of Salvador, Nicaragua and Honduras, providing for the appointment of a Diet, to be composed of one representative from each State, to conduct the foreign relations of the three, each State being independent in its internal concerns. It is to be hoped that the success of this first step will pave the way for the final consolidation of the Central American States.

The establishment of the Greater Republic of Central America, as accomplished by the Treaty of Amapala, was understood by some to be a defensive alliance of Salvador, Honduras and Nica-

ragua against encroachments from the other Central American States, very likely because at that time those States feared the interference of Guatemala in their internal affairs, although President Reyna Barrios had carefully abstained from all interference.

It has also been intimated that the controlling reason for the establishment of the Greater Republic was the desire of the three States forming it to assist each other in the preservation of internal peace, suppressing any revolutionary outbreaks against the existing Governments, an assistance which could be more readily and properly imparted and obtained if the three States formed a common Nation.

Perhaps this object, as well as the purpose of forming a defensive alliance against aggressions from the other Central American States, decided the quasi union agreed upon by the treaty of Amapala; but if so it would show that the idea of a real union was not the main one.

Since this paper was written an important event has taken place in Central America, namely, the treaty signed at the City of Guatemala on June 15, 1897, by a Congress of Central American jurists, who had met there with the purpose of coming to an agreement about matters of judicial legislation, and who finally agreed to make a preliminary union of the five Central American States, for the purpose of being represented abroad, keeping for the present their own independence in internal affairs. It was agreed upon that the President of each of the five Central American States should fill for one year the office of President of the Union, following the alphabetical order of the names and the respective countries, and he should have a Federal Council composed of two representatives from each State, who would act as his Secretaries; and this is undoubtedly a great step towards the final consolidation of those States.

Everything looked as if now there was really the purpose of making a preliminary union; but there is reason to doubt whether this attempt will be successful, since the Diet of the Greater Republic of Central America, in submitting the treaty of union to the three States forming that Republic, made amendments to the same which are supposed not to be acceptable to the other States and which give room to doubt that the union is earnestly desired.

I have no doubt that the wise, enlightened and progressive policy of General Reyna Barrios, President of Guatemala, who has kept his country aloof from all complications among the other Central American States, even with his neighbors, Honduras and Salvador, and has guaranteed life and property in his own country, earnestly promoting important and expensive public improvements, has had a



great deal to do with the final agreement which has just been signed, as they now realize that a union with Guatemala will not have the objections that they apprehended before. It is to be hoped that this union will be the beginning of the complete consolidation of those States.

#### VI.—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

I consider the boundary question between Mexico and Guatemala an incident of so much importance that I would have given to the public a review of the case long before this ; but I was afraid that, the facts being so recent, there might still exist some feeling that it might be inopportune to present it in such a way as would be fair to all concerned, living or dead ; and that, notwithstanding that one of my main objects was to dispel the impression prevailing in Mexico about Mr. Blaine's feelings towards us. After the lapse of over sixteen years, and over thirteen years since the question was finally settled between the two interested countries, and when most of the public men concerned have disappeared, I think the time has come to review the events without any danger of being considered prejudiced or unjust towards any one, or as having any other object in view than that of making a fair, impartial and complete presentation of this complex question in all its bearings, for the purpose of drawing from it useful lessons for the future, and dispelling prevailing errors about Mr. Blaine's feelings regarding Mexico.

There is another incident, of lesser consequence, but one that is not without interest, connected with this question and very creditable to Mr. Blaine, which I will mention before concluding this paper. I arrived at Washington, as the official representative of Mexico, early in March, 1882, soon after Mr. Blaine had left the Cabinet of President Arthur, and it became my duty to defend my country's cause, and to show the weakness of Mr. Blaine's position in our boundary question with Guatemala, and this duty I tried to fulfil to the best of my ability. I had had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Blaine during my former residence in Washington, from 1859 to 1868, while he was a leading member of Congress from Maine, and long before he became more prominent as Speaker of the House of Representatives and as a Presidential candidate ; but my acquaintance with him had been slight ; and finding on my return that owing to political differences, a breach had occurred between him and General Grant, for whom I had a strong personal attachment, and to whom I felt under great obligations, I was not

very anxious to renew or strengthen my relations with Mr. Blaine. Besides, Mr. Blaine was then very little in Washington, and I had but few opportunities of coming in contact with him before Mr. Harrison was elected President of the United States, and Mr. Blaine became his Secretary of State.

As my course towards Mr. Blaine had not been particularly friendly, and as he might have taken exceptions to it, I thought that my first duty, after he became Secretary of State, was to explain to him my position, with the view, if he felt himself aggrieved by my conduct, of asking the Mexican Government to relieve me and send some one in my place who would be acceptable to him. Therefore, soon after Mr. Blaine took charge of the State Department, I availed myself of the first suitable opportunity, which occurred, I think, about the 28th of March, 1889, to have a full explanation with him. I then told him exactly what was the position I had taken in regard to his course towards Mexico, during his former administration of the Department of State. In my conversation I referred, of course, to his letter of instructions to Mr. Morgan of July 16, 1881, so often quoted here, and I spoke to him very much in the same manner that I have stated in this paper, without entering into so many details, but in as concise, mild and respectful language as I could possibly use. He thought that I was mistaken in my statement of facts, but I had been careful to take with me a copy of the book in which his letter of instructions had been published, and when I read its first paragraph he was satisfied that I was right. The promptness and sincerity with which he replied to my intimation that if he thought I had done him wrong, I would ask for my withdrawal from Washington, were very much to his credit. He said that he desired me to remain, and that he thought I had only done my duty in the course I had taken in relation to the boundary question. I am glad to say that from that time my relations with Mr. Blaine were of the most cordial and pleasant character, and that while he remained in the Department of State we never had even the shadow of an unpleasantness or difficulty of any kind whatsoever, notwithstanding the difficult question which came up later on between our respective countries.

In writing this paper, therefore, it has not been my purpose to criticise Mr. Blaine or any one else, and much less to show an unfriendly feeling toward any one. In so far as Mr. Blaine is concerned, I feel, on the contrary, under great obligations to him for the very kind, confidential and generous manner in which he treated me, while he was Secretary of State under President Harrison;

and, far from having any ill-feeling toward him, I am an enthusiastic admirer of his many high and noble personal qualities, which made him preëminent among the public men of this great country, and I should consider it a privilege if my testimony could, in any instance, serve to clear his name from unjust aspersions cast upon it by those ignorant of his motives, and I feel satisfied that the misunderstanding prevailing in Mexico will be dispelled when this paper is read. To do this, I feel, is to render a service to this country and to her sister republics of this continent. If I have succeeded in any degree in accomplishing this purpose, I shall be more than compensated for the time employed in writing this paper.

M. ROMERO.

WASHINGTON, JULY 31, 1897.

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(FOOT NOTE † TO PAGE 296.)—I think it due to Mr. Blaine to insert here extracts from his Biography by Miss Dodge, a relative of his, which I understand was revised by himself, and which gives his views on this subject, coinciding with what I have said in this paper. I take, therefore, from the "Biography of James G. Blaine, by Gail Hamilton" the following extracts, Chapter XVI., pages 505, 510 and 511:

But first must be peace. This, Mr. Blaine believed could be accomplished only by the aid of our own country, which must at once abandon her attitude of segregation and isolation, and assume the fraternal relations and responsibilities of a nation not only the most powerful of the Western Hemisphere, but the founder and, in some sense, the guarantor and guardian of Republican principles on the American continent. European powers had been interested in promoting strife between the Spanish American countries. Weak Southern republics were in European toils, unwilling victims, unwitting accomplices of those who had no interest in republics save to wrest from them personal gain; whose object was to foment the discord which it was our advantage to allay. Mr. Blaine's purpose was to consolidate their interests and conciliate their friendship with the strong republic of the North,—ultimately building up by the natural alliances of mental activity, comfort and culture, a continental system of governments by the people and for the people, in which the United States should hold the first place because first in the confidence of all. His aspiration was to win for our country the primacy of peace, elsewhere sought through war. He believed the time had fully come to establish and perpetuate the Republic of God to show that the path of prosperity need not be a way of blood and tears, but lies along the prosperity and happiness of other nations. . . .

To the new administration which had just come into power in Mexico, the new administration of the North sent cordial congratulations, desiring that the ties of commercial and industrial interchange should be so continued and increased as to strengthen the mutual good will of the two countries, and that the development of Mexican resources, even by coöperation of United States citizens, should be for the primary benefit of the Mexican people themselves, recognizing in the independence and integrity of the Mexican nation a natural finality which enabled both republics to unite in a closer union of political sympathy and friendship.

Trouble having arisen between Mexico and Guatemala on a question of boundaries, the latter State asked the good offices of this Government as the natural protector of Republican interests. They were promptly and warmly rendered. The unselfishness of American interposition was illustrated by the support which the United States had freely lent to Mexico even when we were engaged in a desperate domestic struggle, and only that broader selfishness was appealed to which involves the benefit of all in the benefit of one. To uphold strong Republican governments in Spanish America, and to cement the natural union of these Republics against the tendencies of other and distant forms of government, was avowed to be the cherished plan of the President; and the strength, the generosity, and the friendliness of Mexico were alike and earnestly addressed in favor of a settlement of differences by diplomacy or by arbitration rather than by the conflict of arms. Mexico was reminded that the two governments acting in cordial harmony could induce all other independent governments of North and South America to aid in fixing the policy of peace forever between nations of the Western Hemisphere. With or without the coöperation of Mexico, this Government announced its determination to continue the policy of peace.

When the Guatemalan Envoy was presented to the President, complimentary reference was made to his family, honorably distinguished at the siege of Saragossa, and the President expressed his great personal and official interest in the reunion of Central America, and his hope to see its accomplishment during his own administration.